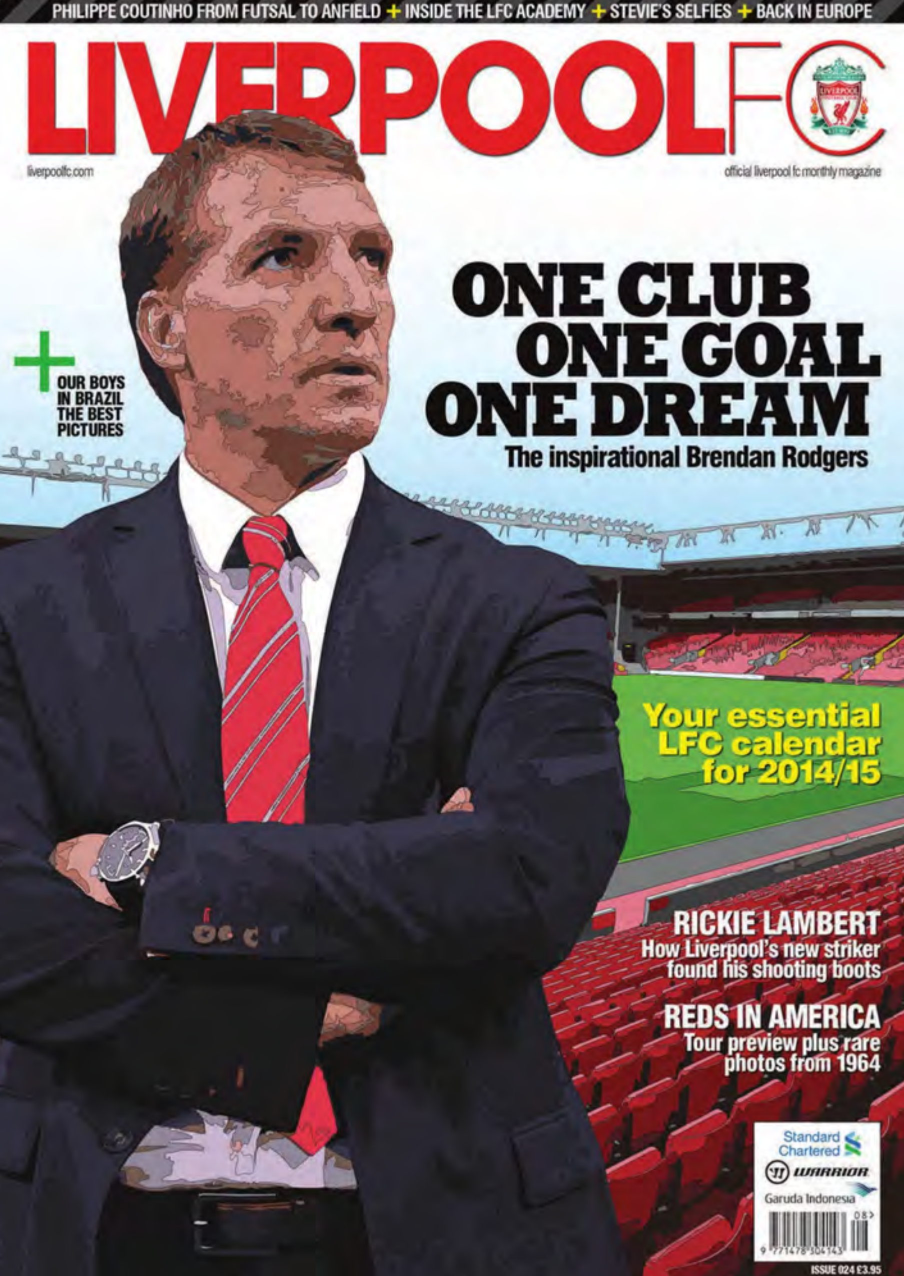

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TEENAGE FAN CLUB

Raheem Sterling's performance against Italy was the highlight of England's stay in Brazil with Andrea Pirlo commenting that the Liverpool winger was the "only English player to cause me problems" and pundit Thierry Henry also revealing his appreciation: "He played ever so well with Liverpool – I like him."


19
19



MADE IN LIVERPOOL

In their World Cup opener on 14 June England scored a goal that was initially created and ultimately converted by Liverpool players. Raheem Sterling sliced open the Italian defence with a pass before Daniel Sturridge scored for the fifth time at international level by side-footing home Wayne Rooney's cross.




14
PIRLO
21



HENDO'S BIG HIT

Jordan Henderson fires a fierce shot at the Italian goal during England's opening game. The Liverpool midfielder, who turned 24 three days later, admitted: "It's been really disappointing but what doesn't kill you makes you stronger and you've just got to keep going and learn from the experience."


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CAPTAIN'S VERDICT

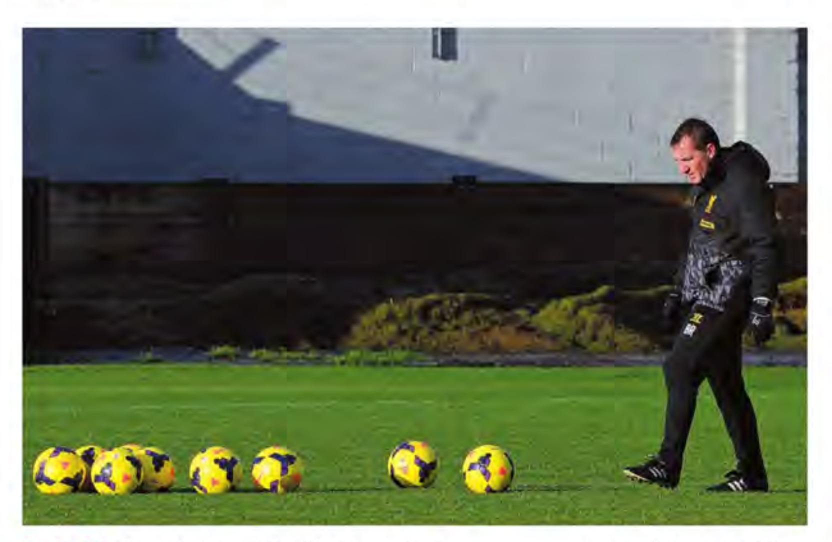
When Steven Gerrard replaced Jack Wilshere from the bench against Costa Rica, it was the Liverpool skipper's 114th appearance for his country. His opinion on England's current situation was clear: "We have to get the balance right of still having the best league in the world but expanding the pool of players for this England manager and the England managers in the future."

THE MAKING OF BRENDAN RODGERS

PART TWO

From sports-mad schoolboy to manager of the season – how and why it happened by those who have worked with him





When Brendan Rodgers was a student at St Patrick's College in Ballymena in Northern Ireland there was no football team. Instead, physical education consisted of basketball, Gaelic football and hurling.

In particular PE teacher Paul McKee remembers the future Liverpool manager's aptitude on the court. "As a student he was mad about sport. He would spend all of his free time in the sports hall. I coach basketball and Brendan was a very good player, deceptively fast and smart at setting up attacks. I remember his feint shot where he'd send defenders the wrong way. He was very aware and possessed a tough side. That drive and determination people see now was present back then."

McKee believes that basketball experience has played a part in how Rodgers now sets up his teams to press opponents all over the park. "We've chatted about how he focuses on different zones. Brendan loves the cheeky way players dispossess opponents in basketball, how they almost pick their pockets. He likes that sort of thing in his players."

Tactical acumen seemed to almost come naturally to the youngster from Carnlough, as Noel Canavan, the school's Gaelic football coach, recalls. "There was a crucial game, a semi-final, and despite playing well we were losing by a couple of points at half-time. So during the interval I said that I wanted us to try a simple move. It was to start with the left corner-back [equivalent of a full-back in soccer] who switched the ball to the right wing where it was moved on to the left-half forward, Brendan. We did it three times in the first six minutes of the second half, scored two goals and one point and went on to win. Brendan could see what was required, whereas the other lads kept asking how it had worked."

Cormac O'Loan, manager of the college hurling team, adds: "Soccer was always his first love. But if you gave him a practice drill he'd go away and do it relentlessly. He knew his limitations and sometimes that's a good strength to have. He was a great believer in practising. He realised that only by repetition of the basics could you get them right. I'd imagine he still preaches that now."

"SPORT WAS EVERYTHING TO HIM AND HE WAS ALWAYS A GREAT BELIEVER IN PRACTISING"

"FIRST IMPRESSIONS LAST AND I COULD TELL IMMEDIATELY THAT BRENDAN WAS A GREAT COACH"

Sonning Cricket Club, a few miles east of Reading. A Friday evening in August 1999 and light years away from the Premier League. An unfamiliar face enters through the gates. Peter Grant, then a 33-year-old midfielder, had just joined Reading FC from Norwich. The main reason for his decision was the presence of manager Tommy Burns at the Madejski Stadium, the pair having previously worked together at Celtic.

Grant had been signed to play and also coach, which was why he was at Sonning CC. There, Reading's youngest players were taught football's basic skills. The man educating them was Brendan Rodgers.

"First impressions are everlasting," Grant says, "and I could tell that Brendan was a great coach. I'd already done all my badges but because I was still playing it was tough to fit in more coaching hours. That's why I was there that night. Reading used the cricket ground for training kids, aged 9-12 and all loving the session."

Over the weeks that followed Peter could see why. "The reason was Brendan. No matter what the weather – rain, shine, sleet or snow – he was out on the pitch with a smile on his face. That rubbed off on the kids. At that stage kids are obviously learning and make plenty of mistakes, but Brendan was always patient and encouraging. He regularly told them hard work was important – that's something you still hear him talking about now."

A few years earlier Rodgers himself had harboured ambitions of making it as a player with Reading. Those hopes were curtailed by a knee problem so he channelled his energies in a different direction. "Some people would have dropped out of the game altogether after that setback," continues Grant. "Instead Brendan put everything into being the best coach he could be. From what I saw nobody worked harder."

That ethic was instilled in him by the man who'd brought Rodgers and Grant together, Tommy Burns, whose three-year Celtic reign in the mid-1990s produced a team which played attractive, attacking football.

"I know Brendan really looked up to Tommy, who sadly passed away in 2008. Tommy was a purist. He wanted his teams to produce free flowing football, like Brendan does now. If you looked at Tommy's Celtic teams they always had strong attacking players like Pierre Van Hooijdonk, Jorge Cadete, Andreas Thom and Paolo Di Canio. You can see Brendan tries to do the same now by sometimes having Luis Suarez, Daniel Sturridge, Raheem Sterling and Philippe Coutinho in the same side.

"Celtic fans want their team to win by playing the right way. Tommy tried to do that. Liverpool fans are similar and Brendan wants to provide them with both victories and entertainment. Liverpool might have just missed out on the title last season but you could tell from the fans' reaction that they were delighted by the football they watched on a regular basis.

"Tommy was massively influenced by Dutch football and Ajax. Brendan has probably taken more from Spanish football. But again, there is a similarity with Tommy because he is very open to new or different ideas."

Many viewers have commented on the improvement in players Rodgers has brought about, citing Jordan Henderson, Raheem Sterling and Jon Flanagan as examples. Grant had first-hand experience of Burns doing the same in Glasgow.

"Tommy would spend hours out on the training field trying to help players develop. As captain I sometimes had to remind him that we'd been there for three or four hours and the lads needed to finish up. It happened because he'd lost himself in the coaching. Brendan has that similar appetite for making players better. I think the evidence is there for everyone to see. But even working with the kids at Reading it was the same, he wanted to help every one of them become better and tried his utmost to make it happen."

Burns' tenure at then Second Division Reading lasted 18 months. Grant also moved on, to become a player coach at Bournemouth in May 2000. Rodgers remained with the Berkshire outfit, establishing himself as one of the key figures in their academy set-up before joining Chelsea in 2004.

Despite having gone their separate ways Grant and Rodgers kept in touch, and when the former was appointed Norwich boss in 2006 he was quickly on the phone to his ex-colleague.

"I wanted Brendan to be my assistant. I thought he would have been ideal for the role. But I couldn't offer him a lot of money and the fact he would have had to uproot his family was also a major factor. I was disappointed we didn't make it happen because I knew what Brendan was capable of.

"The way that he always wanted to improve and better himself meant he had little problem moving up from coaching kids to adults. Sometimes that jump is too big for coaches. Senior players aren't always receptive to people who didn't play the game at the highest level. But, with the way Brendan works, players couldn't be anything other than impressed."

When the Ulsterman did leave Chelsea it was to become manager of Watford in 2008, before he returned to Reading for a brief spell in charge. It was finally at Swansea City where he rose to prominence. Taking the Welsh side to the Premier League and keeping them there was an accomplishment that ultimately earned him the Anfield job.

His ascent to being named as LMA manager of the year for 2014 has come as no surprise to Grant. "It isn't just in the last year or two that he's become a good coach. He's been working on it for a lot longer and all that effort and dedication has paid off.

"I still live in Norwich and when Liverpool played down here in April I went to the team hotel the night before the game to meet Brendan. We had a cup of tea and a good chat about those Friday nights at Sonning Cricket Club."



"HE PUTS FAITH IN YOU – HE KNOWS DELEGATION CAN GO A LONG WAY"

Chris Davies, LFC's head of opposition analysis, met Brendan Rodgers as a youth-team player at Reading a decade ago. Rodgers made Davies his captain before a succession of injuries halted a promising career.

From there, the pair embarked on separate paths: Rodgers to Chelsea, Watford, then back to Reading; and Davies to the University of Loughborough, New Zealand as a semi-professional before returning to England where he completed his A licence coaching badges.

By the time Rodgers arrived at Swansea City, he looked to make fresh appointments to his backroom. He remembered Davies' ability as a player but most importantly his honesty, hard work and aptitude for carrying out instructions.

What Davies likes most about Rodgers' management style, however, is the way he enables staff to operate with autonomy. "Brendan places a lot of faith in you," he says. "He understands that in management, delegation among people whom you trust goes a long way to achieving success." Chris believes staff are afforded a certain degree of independence not only because Rodgers trusts the people he works with, but also because his directives are clear. "The process starts with Brendan. Because I know exactly what he wants in terms of play patterns, I understand implicitly what he wants me to look for when I go and watch an opposition team. His management is very clear. Whether you're in the coaching department, medical, scouting – any type of research – the backroom staff appreciate what his expectations are.

"For instance, I'm sure the recruitment team will know that if Brendan wanted to sign a winger, they will look for someone who is creative in a one-against-one situation, rather than someone who is going to get on the end of crosses from the other side of the pitch. Likewise the physiotherapy team understand the style of the team so they can build the demands of the training and recovery around that."

The manager's approach to detail is his greatest strength, according to Davies. No facet of football is ignored. Although the focus is upon getting the maximum out of his Liverpool players, attention is paid to every detail of the opposition. "Brendan is very specific on what he wants me to look at. Three regional scouts will go and watch a team before me and provide reports. I will then use the intelligence alongside video analysis before watching an opponent the week immediately before Liverpool are due to face them to try and establish their most current form. It means by the time Liverpool are playing an opponent, we have watched them a minimum of 10 times."




BR
L.F.C.

"I'M SKIPPING INTO WORK, ENJOYING TRAINING, AND I THINK EVERY PLAYER IS THE SAME"

The arrival of Brendan Rodgers at Anfield in the summer of 2012 meant he became the fifth manager under whom Steven Gerrard had worked at domestic level.

Rodgers, 39 at the time, was just seven years older than his skipper. "When Brendan was appointed we talked for around 45 minutes to an hour," Gerrard said a few weeks after meeting the new boss. "I felt it was important to do that and hear his plans. It was all interesting and, I have to say, I liked what I heard. He was really honest and respectful of the club.

"I also spoke to a few people who'd worked with Brendan and they all told me I'd enjoy playing for him. He's been coaching for 20 years. In that time he's had the experience of being at a big club like Chelsea and he had Swansea City performing very well.

"Swansea was a really good platform and the timing is right for him to come here. He seems to have a great belief in himself which is good to see."

Halfway through 2012/13 and the results had been mixed. The work going on at Melwood on a daily basis needed time to bear fruit, as Gerrard pointed out. "I've been very impressed. I like the way Brendan wants to play football, his philosophy, the way he man-manages players individually and the way that he manages the team.

"He's shown he's got a lot of bottle. To come and take this job on was an unbelievable challenge, but he knew that. He's enjoying it, although he also realises what a big job he's got in store. I think this team will make rapid strides and get to where it wants to be over the next couple of years. I'm confident of that."

Now, with the Reds having come within three points of the title, scored over a century of goals and earned a return to the Champions League, those words seem prophetic. And the captain is quick to praise the man who has spearheaded the rise up the table.

"You have to give huge credit to the manager. He came in – a young manager taking a huge job – and to have the impact he's had in such a short space of time is phenomenal really. I'm enjoying every minute working with him. He's a top manager, a top bloke.

"I'm skipping into work, enjoying training, and I think every player's the same. You can see it in our performances – everyone's expressing themselves, playing with confidence and belief. He takes the fear away from you as a player. You're not scared to make mistakes under him because you're playing the exact way he wants you to play.

"His first six months was obviously everyone getting used to him. But as soon as the message got across to the team I think we've carried it out really well over the last 18 months."





Dr Steve Peters, the club's psychiatrist, had worked with Liverpool players independently in the past – Steven Gerrard and Craig Bellamy being two. When Rodgers was appointed Reds boss in the summer of 2012, he was interested to meet the person Bellamy claimed "had helped take his game to a different level."

Today Steve spends one day a week at Melwood and is available to players in the hours before matches, often accompanying the squad. In the pages of this magazine, Daniel Sturridge and Raheem Sterling have spoken of his impact. Sterling revealed how before Liverpool's victory over Manchester City, he went to meet Peters in a city-centre hotel. "I was a bit unsure whether it would be beneficial but the things said gave me a lot of confidence." Hours later of course Sterling scored Liverpool's opening goal in the 3-2 win.

Upon signing for Liverpool in 2013, Sturridge quickly struck a rapport with the psychiatrist. "I wanted to improve my game and realised even if it gives you a one-per-cent advantage, it's worth trying to get the edge."

Peters' arrival at Liverpool made him the first psychiatrist to be appointed by the club in its history. He believes that without the manager's "open-mindedness" he'd never have been afforded the opportunity. "From our first meeting it was clear that Brendan was unusual in a sporting sense. A lot of people at the top don't have a psychological perspective. But Brendan does. It was clear that he was a man who listened. He is very big on teamwork. It isn't a case of me coming in and telling him what to do. Instead we discuss matters as a group and arrive at a consensus."

Steve describes himself as "an outsider looking in. From that position it's clear that Brendan has created a fully-functioning team. As one piece of the jigsaw I can see the rest of the jigsaw. It's very strong all-round. The foundations are there for success.

"You have to be realistic, though. You can't say that because there is a strong team, success will automatically follow. You can never guarantee anything in football. I have seen games where the team plays well, dominates but loses. There's a big difference to track and field where if an athlete performs well, there's a likelihood that they'll win. Having everything in place off the field just increases the chance of probability that the club will gain strength and therefore be more successful."

"A LOT OF PEOPLE AT THE TOP DON'T HAVE A PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE – BRENDAN DOES"

THEY SAY:

Raheem Sterling: "The way that the manager is running the club is definitely the right way. It's not just on the football side – there's always someone there for whatever you need. Nutrition, the mental side or technical analysis, we don't have to ask. When you couple that with the standard of the players here, you realise it was only going to be a certain amount of time before we started winning a lot of matches. "

Kolo Toure: "The manager, the club captain and even the people who work at Melwood – like those that work upstairs, the ladies who serve us and the chef – you can see that people really enjoy to be here. This [environment] has come from the manager, definitely. The manager is very clever."

Daniel Sturridge: "It's great to play for someone who wants the team to go forward and produce free-flowing football. As a striker there isn't much more you can ask for. The boss wants us to retain possession, create angles and make ourselves available to receive the ball. By doing that you tire the opposition out. Then opportunities will come along and it's up to us to convert them."

Joao Carlos Teixeira: "When I was lucky enough to make my debut for the first team at Fulham last season the manager gave me a lot of confidence before I went on. He just said to me: don't be afraid and try to shoot and score. When you are training well you know you are prepared."

Jon Flanagan: "The manager has helped me a lot. He's like a teacher – and you always listen. Positionally and going forward, there have been improvements. He's proven that if you take his advice on board and give everything, the opportunity will come. It's a positive message for all the lads, especially the ones younger than me."

Simon Mignolet: "Brendan Rodgers is a gaffer who gives you confidence. He speaks openly to you and I always like that in a manager – if you can speak to him and ask him things, it helps. I am very pleased we have those channels of communication and I look forward to learning a lot more from him in the times ahead."

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ACCRINGTON TO ANDALUSIA

The adventures of last season's on-loan LFC players



TIAGO ILORI

The young centre-back joined Granada for the second half of the season and helped them maintain their La Liga status. The Portuguese U21 made his debut in February and played nine times on the right side of defence. On making the switch to southern Spain, he said: "I'm here to gain experience, get minutes in games and help Granada. Next season, hopefully I can play at Liverpool."



ANDRE WISDOM

The England Under 21s captain spent the majority of the 2013/14 season with Derby County. The defender helped the Rams reach the play-off final before they missed out on promotion in heartbreaking fashion as QPR scored a late winner at Wembley. Playing predominantly at right-back, he made 37 starts for the Pride Park club. "Andre's been a tremendous addition," said manager Steve McClaren. "He has pace and he's got strength. He gets forward too and uses the ball well."

FABIO BORINI

The Italian forward was one of the stars of Sunderland's fight to avoid relegation under Gus Poyet. Borini netted 10 goals in 40 appearances with the pick of his strikes including a winning penalty at former club Chelsea and a goal in the Capital One Cup final at Wembley.

Fabio said: "It's been a great season. I've had 40 appearances after a year when I was injured.

It was the hardest season I've ever had because we have been constantly fighting, but this builds your character. It makes you stronger. You learn how to suffer and how to get out of hard situations and that builds you and gets you ready for anything. I've always thought I was a Premier League player – Liverpool wouldn't have bought me otherwise. The injuries I could not control. This season I was injury-free and I've showed I can play."

JACK ROBINSON

The left-back earned vital experience of playing league football at Bloomfield Road. He told the Blackpool website: "Playing games at this level every week is something I haven't done before. To get games in the Championship has been brilliant." Jack made 34 appearances as the Tangerines beat the drop, finishing the season in 20th position, two points clear of the danger zone.



SUSO

Like Ilori, the young attacking midfielder played with a La Liga team from Andalusia. And, just as was the case for Granada, Suso's Almeria were among a handful of teams battling to beat the drop on the final day. He was an unused sub as Almeria drew 0-0 with Athletic Bilbao – a point that kept them up as they finished one place above the dropzone. Suso won admirers in Spain for his impressive performances with the Rojiblancos and the 20-year-old made 33 appearances, scoring three goals and contributing seven assists.

JORDON IBE

A fortnight after coming on as a sub for Steven Gerrard in the 5-1 thrashing of Arsenal at Anfield, the 18-year-old joined Championship strugglers Birmingham. The pacy England Under 19s frontman made 13 appearances for the St Andrew's side as they escaped relegation thanks to a last-minute equaliser at Bolton on the final day. Ibe scored once in his spell with Lee Clark's side – an 18th-minute strike in the 3-2 win at Millwall in March. Upon his return to Liverpool, he lit up the post-season friendly in Dublin with a man-of-the-match display as the Reds defeated Irish opponents Shamrock Rovers 4-0.



CONOR COADY

Sheffield United just missed out on the League One play-offs after an incredible run in the second half of the season under ex-Red Nigel Clough. The Blades were 19th at Christmas just three points above the relegation places. The turnaround saw them finish seventh. They also reached the semi-finals of the FA Cup. Conor made 50 appearances for the team, scoring six goals.

ALSO ON LOAN...

Oussama Assaidi

The pacy Moroccan winger enjoyed an excellent season at the Britannia Stadium as Stoke City achieved their highest league position since 1975. He figured in 25 games, scoring five times with the pick a late winner against Chelsea in December.

Pepe Reina

The Spanish international goalkeeper became a favourite in Naples under old Reds boss Rafa Benitez, making 30 Serie A appearances as the club finished third and won the Coppa Italia.

Krisztian Adorjan

The Hungarian midfielder made 19 appearances and scored three goals as Groningen finished seventh in the Dutch Eredivisie. His side then defeated Vitesse Arnhem and AZ Alkmaar to win the play-offs to participate in next season's Europa League qualifiers.

Jakub Sokolik

The Czech central defender was a regular in the Southend United side after joining on loan in March. He helped the Shrimpers secure a play-off spot as they finished fifth, but they were edged out 3-2 in the semi-finals by Burton Albion. He made a dozen appearances for Phil Brown's side.

Ryan McLaughlin

The promising full-back made nine appearances during an injury-hit spell at Barnsley. Unfortunately the Tykes were unable to stave off relegation to League One, finishing the campaign one place off the bottom of the table. Ryan made his Northern Ireland debut in the recent friendly with Uruguay and then won a second cap v Chile.

Craig Roddan

The midfielder had spells at League One Carlisle United and League Two Accrington Stanley but couldn't quite force his way into the starting line-up on a regular basis.

Henoc Mukendi

The 20-year-old striker moved to Scottish Premier League side Partick Thistle on loan last July but was unable to make an impression with the Jags.

BACK IN EUROPE

A pre-season crib sheet for the 2014/15 UEFA Champions League…

The 2014/15 UEFA Champions League will be the 60th season of Europe's premier club football tournament, and the 23rd since it was renamed from the European Cup to the Champions League. This will be the first season where clubs must comply with UEFA Financial Fair Play Regulations.

The draw for the group stage takes place in Monaco on 28 August 2014. The 32 teams will be allocated into four pots based on their club coefficients, with defending champions Real Madrid automatically in Pot 1. The teams will be drawn into eight groups of four, with those from the same association kept apart. Liverpool are currently in pot 3 along with Sporting Lisbon and Galatasaray, with the remaining clubs in the pot to be confirmed.

A total of 77 contenders are taking part from the first qualifying round – including a club from Gibraltar, after the territory's FA was accepted as the 54th UEFA member in May 2013. Lincoln Red Imps, champions of the Gibraltar Premier Division, are taking part in the first qualifying round (ties played 1/2 July and 8/9 July).

Steven Gerrard has made 81 appearances in the Champions League – ten behind club record-holder Jamie Carragher. No Reds player has scored more goals in the competition than the skipper, with 28. The closest is Dirk Kuyt with 12, then Peter Crouch (11) and Luis Garcia (10).

Liverpool's next victory in the competition will be their 100th in thr European Cup/Champions League. The overall LFC record in the tournament is: played 175, won 99, drawn 39, lost 37, goals for 317, goals against 144. So far, the Reds have faced 39 different teams in the Champions League with the most games coming against Chelsea (10).

This will be Liverpool's 21st campaign in Europe's premier tournament – 12 in the old European Cup (beginning in season 1964/65) and now nine in the Champions League. Matchday two (over 30 Sept and 1 Oct) will be LFC's 100th game in the Champions League since it was re-branded.

Liverpool's next home game in the competition should take the total aggregate crowd to have witnessed Champions League encounters at Anfield beyond the two million-mark. To date 1,970,061 fans have seen Champions League games at L4.

Matchday two will bring Liverpool's 100th game in the competition



The skipper scoring in the 4-0 win over Real Madrid in 2009


COUPE DES


UEFA



When Rickie Lambert arrived at Macclesfield for trials in 2001, manager Gil Prescott was left with a headache. He could immediately spot the youngster's potential but with the League Two side operating on a shoestring budget, he had little wriggle-room to add to his squad.

"We'd seen the kid in an A team/ reserve game ages before and he came in for trials after he had been released by Blackpool," he recalls. "Rickie will tell you himself that he isn't a natural athlete and his fitness levels were lacking a little. But then he had been working in a factory to help ends meet but his ability was never in doubt.

"To be honest, I had to struggle even to get him in for nothing because we were on such a tight budget. But Rickie's attitude was top-class and he had 'stickability'. He'd go with the reserves wherever they went and I remember saying to him: 'I can't do anything for you now but if you're prepared to stick with me, I promise that when we can, we'll give you a contract however small it may be.' He was just desperate to play. When he came in for pre-season the following year he had shed a few pounds and had clearly worked extremely hard over the summer to give himself the best chance."

Once Lambert had become fully integrated into the Silkmen's squad, his technical ability often persuaded Gil to use him in a midfield role. "I gave him his 'Macc' debut up front, coming on as a sub at Exeter. But we often played him in central midfield because he had brilliant vision and saw things so, so quickly which is something you cannot coach. And, of course, he's got a right foot like a siege gun!

"I had gone from Macc by the time they sold him to Stockport for 300 grand but that was great business for the club and the rest is history.

"I remember Granada TV used to have a magazine show and they'd visit all the clubs in the area to profile them. They'd talk to the manager and then do tests with the players to see who was the quickest, who had the hardest shot and so on. Unfortunately Rickie was out injured at the time, but I remember saying to the guy that he would have registered 80mph plus. In fact, I regret not giving him the opportunity to show how hard he could hit it. The goalkeepers used to say the power in his shots was alarming and you don't often hear that in the pro game.

"Liverpool have great options from set-plays and people know all about Rickie's quality from penalties. But now free-kicks from 30, even 35 yards out, are dangerous because when Rickie hits them, they stay hit. Even in open play defenders are inviting trouble if they back off him from that distance.

"I couldn't be happier for him. I have been watching him on TV over the past few years with a big smile on my face and I was made-up when he got his England cap because at 18, 19 years of age, I bet he wouldn't even have dreamed of that."

And Gil, who now works as a scout for Blackburn Rovers, believes Rickie's story is a valuable lesson to young players who experience setbacks early in their careers. "It just highlights that if you keep believing, it can happen. Rickie's on a high in terms of his career now and when you consider his CV you can't get much better than a World Cup in Brazil and signing for Liverpool. He's a proud Scouser and will be made up to have signed for the club. It's a classic case of everything coming to he who waits."

Lambert factfile

CLUB	GAMES	GOALS
Blackpool (1998-00)	0 (3)	0
Macclesfield (2001-02)	41 (8)	10
Stockport (2002-05)	98 (12)	19
Rochdale (2005-06)	65 (3)	28
Bristol Rovers (2006-09)	139 (16)	59
Southampton (2009-14)	219 (16)	117

Sub apps in brackets



Macc lad

"HE'S GOT A RIGHT FOOT LIKE A SIEGE GUN"

So what kind of striker have Liverpool signed? The man who gave Rickie Lambert his full professional debut reveals all...

"For fans the Champions League nights at Anfield are just superb"

The final will be staged on Saturday 6 June 2015 at Berlin's Olympiastadion, which holds over 74,000 spectators. Opened in 1936 for that year's Olympic Games, it's the home of Hertha Berlin who were promoted back to the Bundesliga at the end of last season. The venue staged three matches at the 1974 World Cup finals and six more in 2006, including the final between France and Italy. It's hosted every German Cup final since 1985.

Only one ex-Red has played a full 90 minutes in a Champions League final since 2007, Liverpool's last appearance – Javier Mascherano, for Barcelona v Manchester United at Wembley in 2011. Three have appeared as substitutes: Nicolas Anelka, an extra-time sub for Chelsea v United in Moscow in 2008; Fernando Torres, an 84th minute sub for Chelsea v Bayern Munich in the Bavarian capital in 2012; and Nuri Sahin, a 92nd minute sub for Borussia Dortmund v Bayern Munich at Wembley in 2013. Earlier this year Xabi Alonso missed Real Madrid's win over city neighbours Atletico in Lisbon, while Alvaro Arbeloa was an unused sub on the bench.

Next May is of course the 10th anniversary of Istanbul. Of the 14 Liverpool players who appeared that night, only Steven Gerrard is still with the club. Three others are playing elsewhere: Xabi Alonso with Real Madrid; Djibril Cisse with Bastia; and Djimi Traore with Seattle Sounders. John Arne Riise and Milan Baros were released by Fulham and Antalyaspor respectively at the end of last season. Sami Hyypia is the new boss of Brighton while Dietmar Hamann works in the media. The rest have all retired from playing: Jerzy Dudek, Steve Finnan, Jamie Carragher, Luis Garcia, Harry Kewell and Vladimir Smicer.

Supporters can celebrate Liverpool's return to Champions League football by adding two special patches to the new Warrior home kit for the 2014/15 campaign. One bears an image of the trophy, the other the iconic Champions League brand. Find out more at www.liverpoolfc.com.

Robbie Fowler tells the club's official website: "There are going to be some unbelievable games coming to Anfield next year. As a supporter, the Champions League nights are superb. We know what they are like, supporters and players love them. The manager has not been in the Champions League before so he'll certainly strive to do as well as he can. As a club, we deserve to be in the Champions League – for who we are and what we are. Next season will be magnificent and I can't wait for it."



Madrid make merry last May


L.F.C.
F.A. CUP FINAL
1974

Forty years ago, upon a quiet July day, Bill Shankly announced his decision to retire as Liverpool boss...

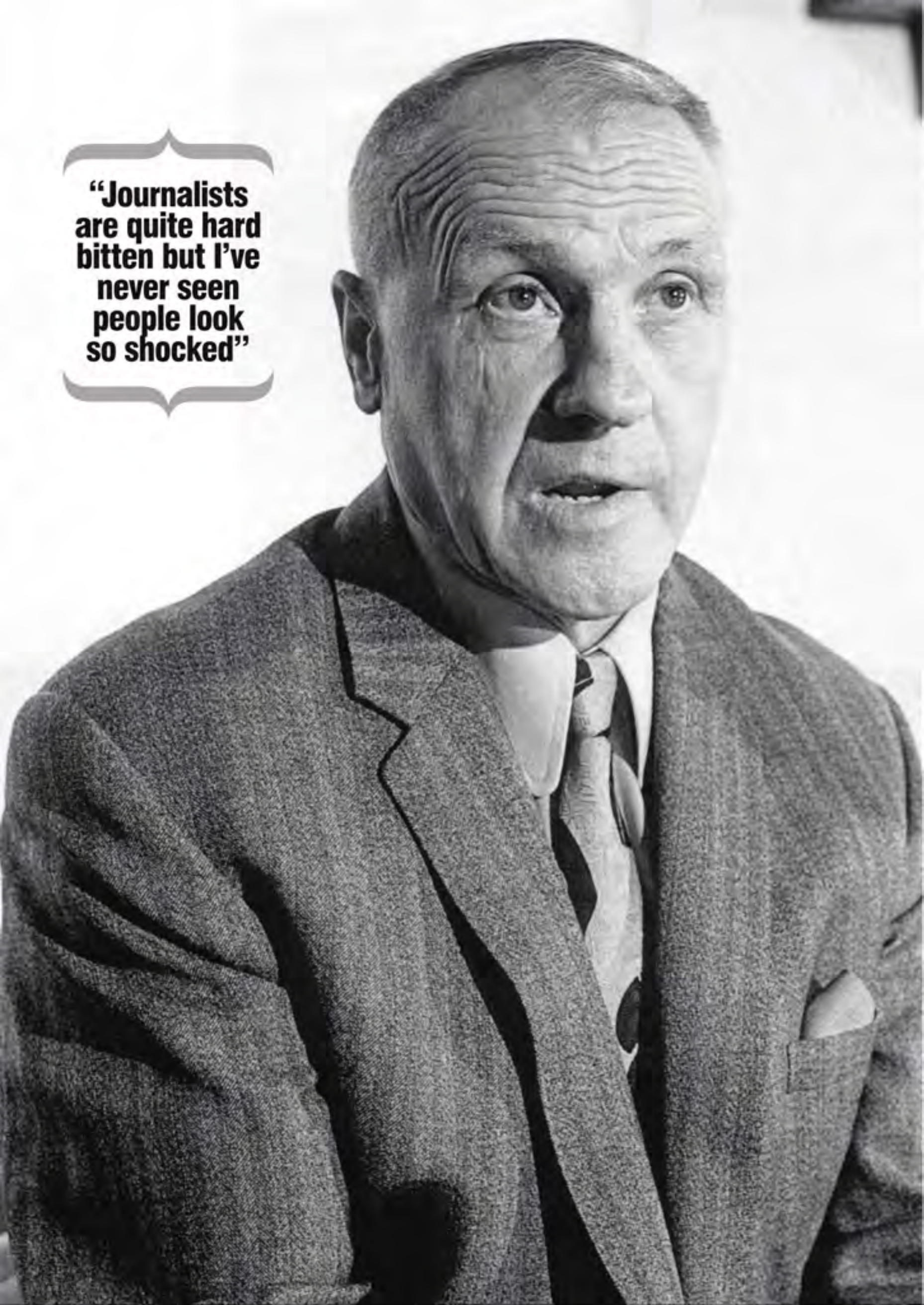
Shankly THE SUMMER THAT SHOCKED FOOTBALL

The summer of 1974 was meant to be a largely sunny one for Liverpool fans. Their side had ended the previous season with a hugely convincing 3-0 FA Cup final win over Newcastle United at Wembley. The prize was, after the League and UEFA Cup double of 1973, a third trophy in just two seasons for Bill Shankly's second great team.

With Kevin Keegan, one of the best players in the country, leading the attack, domination of English football in the years to come appeared possible.

The summer also brought a World Cup in West Germany won by the host nation. The tournament featured a new type of contest in the footballing world: the battle of German boot and kit manufacturers Adidas





“Journalists are quite hard bitten but I’ve never seen people look so shocked”

SHANKS — MAN OF THE PEOPLE

July 12, 1974 . . . the day the impossible happened

• The moment an era ended. Journalists from every medium flocked to Anfield on July 12, 1974, expecting to hear Bill Shankly announce the £200,000 signing of striker Ray Kennedy from Arsenal. But they were stunned as Liverpool chairman John Smith broke the news of the Anfield Laird's retirement. The ground's switchboard was soon jammed with tearful fans pleading for Shanks to remain, but it was too late; his mind was made up.

. . . and how we brought the news

ECHO: THE INCREDIBLE SHANKLY—HIS LIFE AND TI

'It was like walking to the electric chair'

"Mr Shankly wishes to retire from active participation in league football"

and Puma. The rivalry between the companies founded by brothers was demonstrated by the decision of Netherlands superstar Johan Cruyff, who had a personal boot deal with Puma, refusing to wear the three stripes of Adidas on his Dutch shirt in the World Cup final.

An American-dominated Wimbledon – with triumphs for Jimmy Connors and Chris Evert – provided further sporting distraction, while *She* by French crooner Charles Aznavour was the song ruling the airwaves with four weeks at number one.

As June turned into July the FA Charity Shield and a return to 'real' domestic football action grew nearer. Liverpool's opponents at Wembley would be League champions



I had been around a long time and I thought I would like to have a rest, spend more time with my family and maybe get a bit more fun out of life. Whilst you love football, it is a hard, relentless task which goes on and on like a river. There is no time for stopping and resting. So I had to say I was retiring. That's the only word for it, though I believe you retire when you are in your coffin and the lid is nailed down and your name is on it.

Deep down I had thought about it the previous season. Ness had said, 'How long is this going to go on?' I had said, 'I can't tell you.' That wasn't even Nessie's business. It was mine and mine alone.

When I talked to her about it later, she said, 'Are you sure you want to do that?' She didn't want me to do anything that I didn't want to do – and this didn't help me. I suppose I wanted her to say, 'Now is the time.' But we had just won the Cup and had been second in the League and the future was glowing, because Liverpool had built up a system. People respected them so much it bordered on fear.

I had been at Liverpool for fifteen years, and in a sense we had raised them from the dead. It was a terrible wrench to say, 'I'm going,' because after we had won the Cup in 1974 one of the thoughts that crossed my mind was, 'If I stay next season we will win the League, so that would be two teams of mine that won the League, the Cup and the League again in three seasons.' At the Cup Final dinner I said, 'The League is only a formality next season. This team is ready for anything.'

The boys were the right age, not too old and not too young. When a season starts, most of the teams say, 'If we get thirty-six points, we'll be all right,' but I used to say, 'If we get thirty six points by Christmas, we will be all right.' I was so confident that Liverpool would win the League again that I backed them heavily, with a saver on Derby.

If Don Revie had packed in at Leeds earlier I might have said, 'Oh, it might be easier now. I'd better stay on!' Leeds were going to be unsettled for a little while, because new men were coming in and the apple-cart was upset. That was the time to grab the lead again, quickly. I could have waited until the smoke cleared at Leeds. And if Don had joined Everton, as he might

e stage, I would have stayed at Liverpool to

g equal, and having been in the game a long
e been better saying, 'Look, I'm going to have
nths off, then I'll start all over again.' But I
that would have been unfair to the club. That
been using them.
cision final was like being on a jury and having
e'll hang him.' It took a time for me to come
l go now,' but I felt the club was in a good
lly, had trophies in the cupboard and had a
ou leave a club when it is on the slide, people
u. On the other hand, they may say, 'He left
at the top – maybe he's frightened they are
That was definitely wrong because I said I was
he club all the co-operation I could. If they had
, I wouldn't have gone.
e me pack in. It was worked out by myself and
ith, who had been the chairman for a year,
ther contract. In fact he kept reminding me
d, 'Are you worrying about the contract? How
nt it?' I could have stayed on with an increased

weeks went by and I was not enjoying life at all
et it sorted out. I then suggested to the directors
ay to make the changeover was to promote the
.
e men had been at Anfield longer than I had and
the system just like taking their tea. The system
nd simple and Anfield was a bastion. They were
und men. I had elevated them earlier with a view
going to do later on. Bob Paisley, who was num-
, had worked hard and long for Liverpool, and I
become the manager.
as the first-team trainer and Ronnie Moran had
f the reserves. We had brought in Roy Evans and
m a trainer when he was only twenty-seven.
ett was watching rival teams for us. Reuben is a
an, and he had travelled with me more than any-

147



Leeds United, with young manager Brian Clough sensationally installed as Don Revie's replacement.

Prior to the August date with their fierce cross-Pennine rivals, Liverpool supporters expected some new signings to bolster an already formidable squad, with Arsenal forward Ray Kennedy rumoured to be a target. And confirmation of Kennedy's arrival was just what they and the football media expected when Liverpool FC chairman John Smith called a press conference for Friday 12 July.

Instead he told those gathered: "It is with great regret that I have to inform you that Mr Shankly has intimated that he wishes to retire from active participation in league football."

For once, a group of journalists were lost for words – what they'd just heard didn't make any sense. Retirement and Shanks were two things that couldn't ever go together. He was too in love with the game. What else would he do? How would the team survive without him?

Bill had once spoken about the idea of retiring as "the most stupid word I've ever heard in all my life. It should be stricken from the record. You retire when they put the coffin lid down with your name on top." Yet here he was, standing down after 15 years at Anfield. In time his assistant coach Bob Paisley would be appointed as his reluctant successor.

John Keith was the journalist asked by the great man to write the souvenir programme for his subsequent testimonial in 1975. The highly respected writer and broadcaster would also create an acclaimed stage show about the legendary Scot. His reaction at the time of the announcement? "I was staggered. I got a call on the morning to go to the press conference and thought it was about a signing. Journalists and media people are quite hard-



bitten but I've never seen people as shocked as they were when he walked in and said: 'I feel as though I've been dragged to the electric chair but I've made my decision. I've got to resign'.

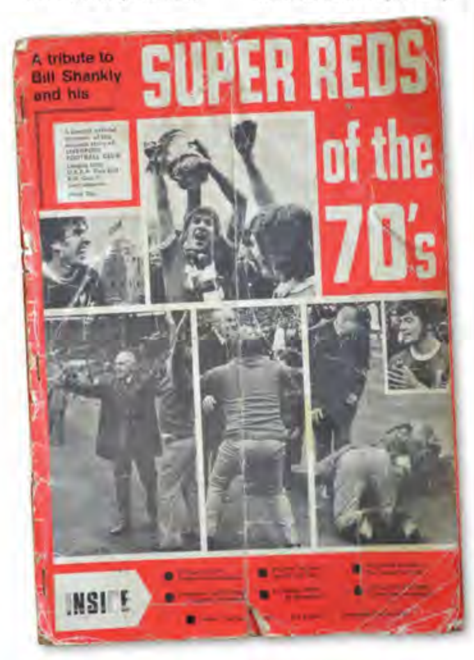
"You could hear gasps from people. It was amazing. Within months, weeks, he regretted it. It was his drug and he didn't have it anymore."

Famously Granada TV dispatched reporter Tony Wilson to the streets of Liverpool to measure the shockwave reverberating through the city. Mike Glover, today a committee member of the Official Liverpool Supporters Club Merseyside Branch and then just another stunned Kopite, recalls: "I remember Tony Wilson outside the Legs of Mann [pub on Lime Street] and people were in disbelief. There was a kid saying, "You're jokin' aren't ya?"

Ray Hughes, season-ticket holder since 1967, adds: "I worked in the Reds Gallery [at the Bluecoat Arts Centre in Liverpool city-centre] for a while and a fella came in, he must have been about 50, and we got chatting and he said, 'You know who I am? The lad with the long hair on that newsreel about Shankly resigning'. Myself at the time, I heard it on the local radio. Like everybody else I was in disbelief because it was so out of the blue."



Shanks reportedly regretted his decision



On that incredible July day in 1974, in thousands of homes around Liverpool and further afield the reaction was the same: shock, and utter incredulity. Shankly was no longer the manager of Liverpool FC.

For Liverpool's opening fixture of the new season at home to Leicester City, the matchday programme opened with a message from not the new manager Paisley but the club chairman, John Smith. He wrote: 'It was of course a matter of great regret to us all when Bill decided the time had come for him to retire; but at least we have been able to preserve the continuity of things with the appointment of Bob as team manager, and the directors were delighted that Bob accepted the invitation to follow in Bill's footsteps.

'Continuity and stability – that, we felt, must be the theme. Why change something that has been tried and proved over the years, for something untried? We believe we have made the right decision. We know that Bob Paisley has been popular with the players, and that he has also commanded their respect. We see no reason why Liverpool should not go from strength to strength'.

"You're 'avin' me on..."

It's 12 July 1974 and Bill Shankly has resigned. Granada Reports man Tony Wilson scours the Liverpool streets for reaction...

TW: It's true, I swear it's the truth, honestly. I'm not joking, really.
FANS: You're having us on.
OLD LADY: Oh you'll have me crying. Oh that's terrible.
YOUNG LAD: You're 'avin' me on, aren't ya?
TW: No, I'm not having you on, I've just been to Anfield.
YOUNG LAD: Who said? What did he say?
TW: Today, he's retiring, he's finished today [Moves on]. Have you heard today's news? Shankly's retiring.
MAN: Is he?
TW: What do you think?
MAN: Thank Christ for that.
TW: Are you an Everton fan?
MAN: Yeah.



COUTINHO 10

data mining



LFC's other Premier League no10s

John Barnes · Michael Owen · Luis Garcia · Andriy Voronin · Joe Cole

65
chances created in Premier League last season

12
assists in Premier League assists in his LFC career



Futsal genius

Key in 'Coutinho' and 'futsal' on YouTube to watch footage of Philippe as a youngster playing the small-sided game beloved in Brazil. Reds boss Brendan Rodgers says: "If you watch those clips of him when he was young, 12 or 13, he's exactly the same. The quality of his passing and the weight of his passes is sensational. And he's a good guy as well. His talent is remarkable. Every single day he does something that makes me think: wow, what a talent."

THE PERFECT 10

Coutinho is on a constant quest for improvement: "I've been trying to improve my intensity in training – this is helpful in matches when we take the ball from the opposition and it's easier to attack with more blank spaces." A perfect example came with his assist for Daniel Sturridge's goal against Arsenal at Anfield as the Reds romped into a four-goal lead inside the opening 20 minutes. He showed:
Anticipation to intercept Ozil's pass. **Strength** to take the ball away from Wilshere. **Vision** to spot Sturridge's run from inside his own half **Accuracy** to bend a pinpoint pass between Arsenal defenders Koscielny and Mertesacker and send Sturridge through on goal.

Sturridge on PC

Daniel Sturridge: "Coutinho is the man. I've said that on the pitch when we've been celebrating goals a few times [against Everton and Arsenal]. He finds me a lot. Some of his passing is pinpoint-accurate. He spots runs and he plays the ball as early as possible to put you through. The type of passes he tries are often killer balls, and because of that they sometimes won't come off. But when they do they are superb. I don't think he gets the credit his passing should."

attan

next month as part of their US tour – and here's native New Yorker Amanda Da Costa's inside guide

some of the best stadium food you will ever have in your life – you have to try the fries at Garlic Fries, and the barbeque from Brother Jimmy's BBQ! The experience is always a good one at Yankee Stadium, and I can't wait to watch the match myself.

Two's company

There will soon be two MLS franchises in the Big Apple – New York City joining New York Red Bull. We've always had some form of 'soccer' team in or near New York, whether it be the New York Red Bulls, the old Metrostars or the even older-school Cosmos. Having two MLS franchises in the heart of New York is great for New Yorkers. The city really is a melting pot of cultures, much of the culture coming in the form of European descent boasting an extreme passion for the game. It shows how much the game is growing in the way that big cities are willing to show their support for new teams, and I am always excited to hear about them.

Hanging out

The 11th Street Bar is home to the Liverpool Supporters Club. If you are a fan in New York but don't have tickets to the match, I recommend going to watch the game there.

I love coffee – maybe a little bit too much! And you can usually just find me walking around the city with a Starbucks cup. They have them on every corner, sometimes even two, so keeping my Starbucks flow throughout the day is easy.

I do have to recommend some places for goodies though. Crumbs Bakery in the city has amazing cupcakes. There is one by Grand Central Station, one on 6th Avenue/ Broadway, and lots of other locations as well. They sell coffee there too and I'm always partial to their cappuccino. Baked by Melissa is another 'miniature' cupcake shop that sells tiny bite-sized cupcakes in interesting (but delicious) flavours. My all-time favourite is the



Made in Manh

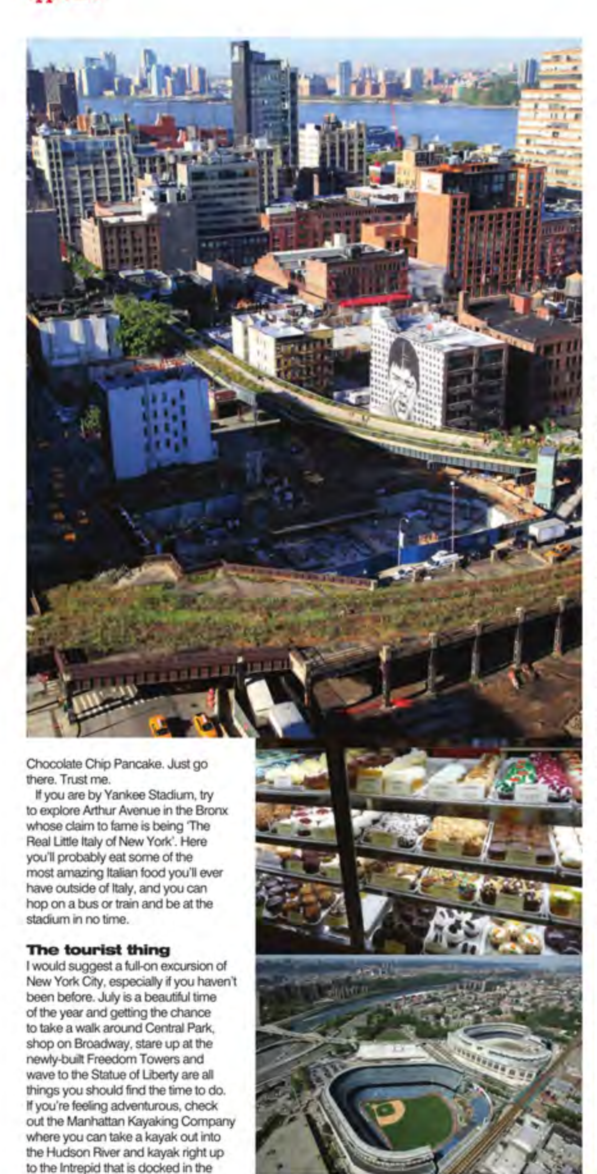
The Reds head for the Big Apple



Yankee doodle

If you're asking about Yankee Stadium, you've come to the right person – I am a huge Yankee fan! I know that baseball isn't exactly an iconic sport in the UK but it's very American and I used to love going to Yankee games when I was in New York. The old Yankee stadium was full of amazing history and beautiful architecture – a very 'old-school feel' when compared to the brand new stadium [opened in 2009].

The new stadium is something to be in awe of. It's immaculately clean and also serves as a New York Yankee museum when you walk through it to find your seats inside. It also boasts



> "The High Line is a public park built on a freight rail line above the East Side"

Chocolate Chip Pancake. Just go there. Trust me.

If you are by Yankee Stadium, try to explore Arthur Avenue in the Bronx whose claim to fame is being 'The Real Little Italy of New York'. Here you'll probably eat some of the most amazing Italian food you'll ever have outside of Italy, and you can hop on a bus or train and be at the stadium in no time.

The tourist thing

I would suggest a full-on excursion of New York City, especially if you haven't been before. July is a beautiful time of the year and getting the chance to take a walk around Central Park, shop on Broadway, stare up at the newly-built Freedom Towers and wave to the Statue of Liberty are all things you should find the time to do. If you're feeling adventurous, check out the Manhattan Kayaking Company where you can take a kayak out into the Hudson River and kayak right up to the Intrepid that is docked in the River, or pay a little extra to take an expert kayak tour to see the Statue of Liberty from the water. After that, have lunch on a ship docked in the Hudson, an amazing lunchtime place called The Frying Pan that prides itself on its amazing food, fun atmosphere, and beautiful views from the water.

LFC in America

In my opinion Liverpool has one of the most widely-known sports crests in the world – even my friends who know nothing about football thought it was cool that I was going to be playing for Liverpool. I think that the club having roots in Boston – in particular their partnership with the Boston Red Sox, the Yankees' biggest rival – helps with their recognition in America in particular. I am proud to be a member of such a well-known club.

My top five NYC places

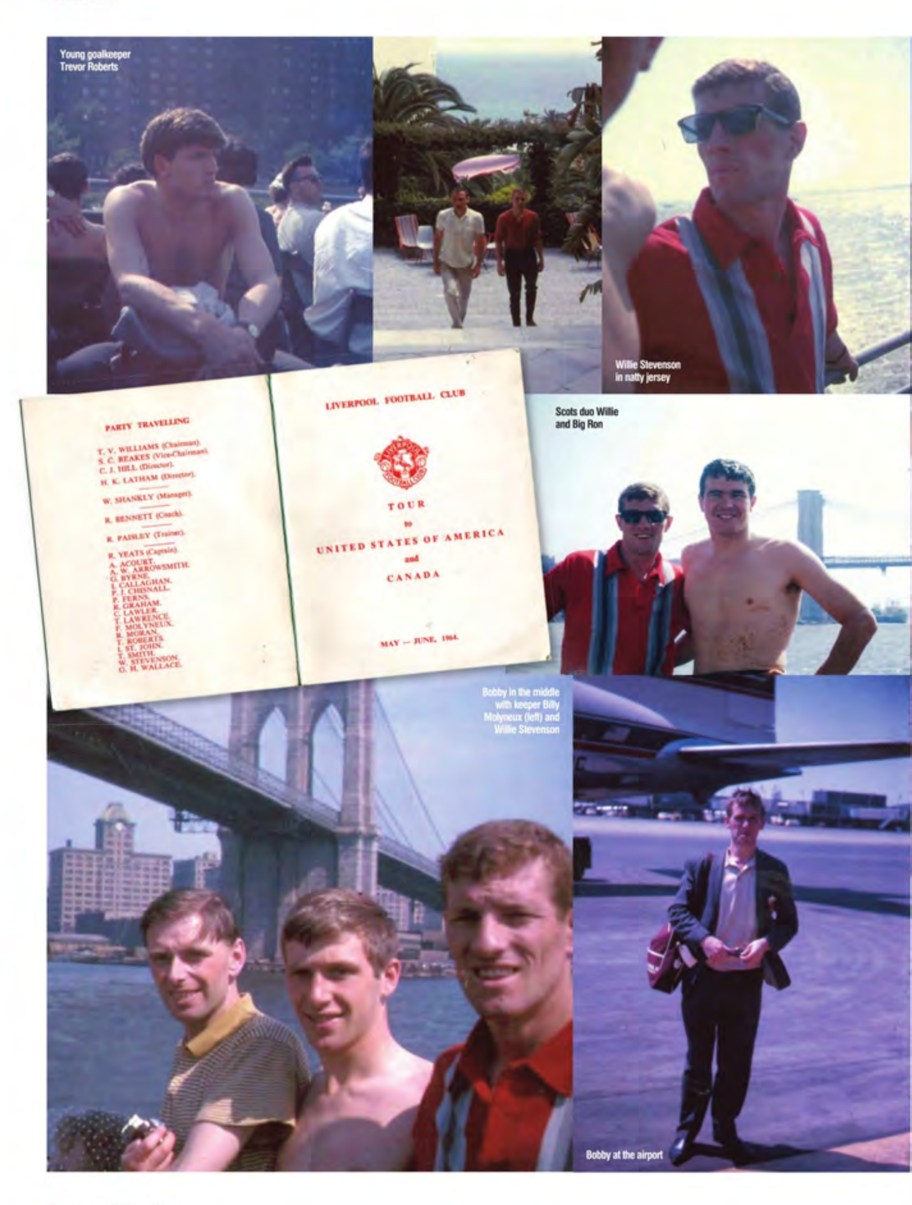
Here they are, in no particular order: Central Park, the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA for short). And the High Line Park, a public park built on a freight rail-line elevated above the streets on the West Side – you can take a walk along a 1.5mile-long garden above the busy streets of Manhattan. And The Frying Pan, usually after a day of kayaking at the Manhattan Kayak Company! And the streets – just exploring them.

LFC fixtures

AS Roma Wed 23 July 2014
7.30pm (EST) Fenway Park Boston
Olympiacos Sun 27 July 2014
5pm (CST) Soldier Field Chicago
Manchester City Wed 30 July 2014
7pm (EST) Yankee Stadium Bronx NY
AC Milan Sat 2 August 2014
6.30pm (EST) Bank of America Stadium Charlotte NC

For the latest news on the summer tour please visit www.lfctour.com


at Yankee Stadium!
NOW BATTING
DAVID MURPHY - LF



PARTY TRAVELLING

T. V. WILLIAMS (Chairman).
S. C. REAKES (Vice-Chairman).
C. J. HILL (Director).
H. K. LATHAM (Director).

W. SHANKLY (Manager).

R. BENNETT (Coach).

R. PAISLEY (Trainer).

R. YEATS (Captain).
A. ACOURT.
A. W. ARROWSMITH.
G. BYRNE.
I. CALLAGHAN.
P. J. CHISNALL.
P. FERNS.
R. GRAHAM.
C. LAWLER.
T. LAWRENCE.
F. MOLYNEUX.
R. MORAN.
T. ROBERTS.
I. ST. JOHN.
T. SMITH.
W. STEVENSON.
G. H. WALLACE.

LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB

TOUR
to
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
and
CANADA

MAY — JUNE, 1964.

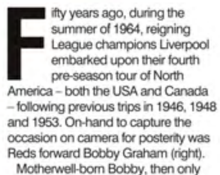
Young goalkeeper Trevor Roberts

Willie Stevenson in natty jersey

Scots duo Willie and Big Ron

Bobby in the middle with keeper Billy Molyneux (left) and Willie Stevenson

Bobby at the airport



Fifty years ago, during the summer of 1964, reigning League champions Liverpool embarked upon their fourth pre-season tour of North America – both the USA and Canada – following previous trips in 1946, 1948 and 1953. On-hand to capture the occasion on camera for posterity was Reds forward Bobby Graham (right).

Motherwell-born Bobby, then only 19, had joined the club three years earlier and was about to feature prominently in Bill Shankly's plans for the forthcoming season. In September 1964 he'd score on his full debut, in a 6-1 win over KR Reykjavik in a European Cup preliminary round second leg at Anfield (the tie was Liverpool's very first taste of continental action).

The Reds arrived in America without Shanks, who remained at home. They scored 15 goals in their first two fixtures: 8-1 v Boston Metros on 8 May (Bobby bagged the eighth) and 7-1 v New York All Stars two days later. There followed a 1-1 draw, surprisingly, with the grandly-named St Louis Catholic Youth Council All Stars, then a 3-0 win over Club de Futbol Monterrey in Chicago.

A subsequent 2-0 defeat by Hamburg in New York was Liverpool's first on US soil. Then came three ill-tempered games with Meidericher Spielverein (now MSV Duisburg)



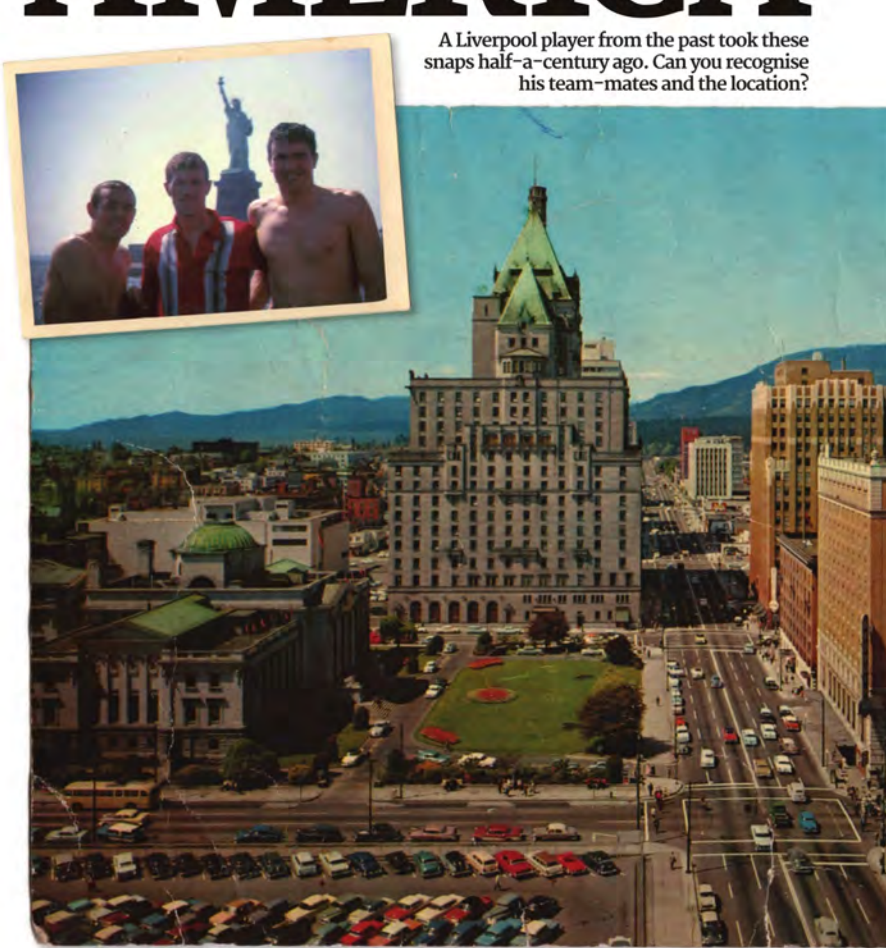
– a 4-1 win, goalless encounter and 1-1 draw, with two red cards thrown in – and a whopping 14-0 win over a San Franciscan Select. The tour concluded with a 2-0 victory over Vancouver All Stars on 10 June. The team's top scorers were Alf Arrowsmith with 14 goals and Ian St John with 11.

Back home, after his debut strike in Europe, Bobby would score a hat-trick against Aston Villa in his first league outing. In total he'd score 31 times in 101 games for the Reds before leaving for Coventry City in 1972.

Now 69, he kindly loaned these photographs to one of our writers. They are a fabulous personal record of Bill Shankly's first great team at the height of its powers, relaxing in the Stateside sunshine.

Postcards from AMERICA

A Liverpool player from the past took these snaps half-a-century ago. Can you recognise his team-mates and the location?





Sitting off in the sunshine

Ronnie Moran and Gerry Byrne

Cool Chris Lawler

The Saint and Ron Yeats

"When they start singing 'You'll Never Walk Alone' my eyes start to water. There have been times when I've actually been crying while I've been playing."

KEVIN KEEGAN



How four young players have drawn strength from the inspiring interior of Liverpool FC's Academy

The write stuff

"Champions aren't made in gyms. Champions are made from something they have deep inside them: A desire, a dream, a vision. They have to have last minute stamina, they have to be a little faster, they have to have the skill and will. But the will must be stronger than the skill."

Muhammad Ali is a former American boxer and was born on 17th January, 1942. As an amateur, he won a gold medal in the light heavyweight division at the 1960 Summer Olympics in Rome. In 1967, Ali refused to fight in the Vietnam War with the U.S. military based on his religious beliefs. At this time males aged between 18-35 years were expected to do so if ... arrested and found guilty of ... Ali had his



"BARNES DID WHAT WE EXPECTED HIM TO DO. HE MADE A GOAL, SCORED ONE, AND ENTERTAINED. YOU REMEMBER THAT."

KENNY DALGLISH

LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB

JOHN BARNES
LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB

"*A lot of football success is in the mind. You must believe that you are the best and then make sure that you are.*" BILL SHANKLY

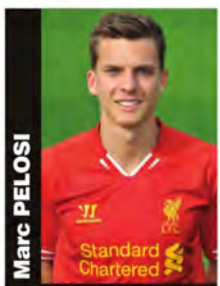
THE ACADEMY
LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB

The journey is hard. The journey is long.
Are YOU up to the challenge?



"I have kept this moment, and this struggle in my mind. If I have to go through it again I'll stand up and I'll take my best shot."

On 15 March 2011, Barcelona announced that **Abidal** was diagnosed with a tumor on his liver. He had surgery on his liver on 17 March 2011. On 28 May 2011, Barcelona beat Manchester United 3-1 to win the Champions League final. Abidal played the whole game. In a moving gesture to mark his amazing recovery, Abidal's teammates gave him the captain's armband as well as allowing him to be the first in the team to raise the trophy in front of 85,000 people in Wembley Stadium.



The American midfielder, who turned 20 last month, was ruled out of action for 14 months after suffering a broken leg. He returned at the back-end of last season. "When I got injured I couldn't believe it. I never imagined something like that would happen to me and it took a while to get my head around it. At first I wasn't able to put any weight on the leg. It was so swollen I couldn't even stand in front of the mirror to brush my teeth.

"Most people see football as a very glamorous job or way of life. But injures are definitely a big downside to it. During my rehab I spent a lot of time in the classroom here at the Academy. You can't help but notice the posters and quotes on the walls around the place. Reading about the tough times that some sportsmen, such as Michael Jordan – who was one of the best ever – or Eric Abidal had to go through was a big help. It made me see that I could recover and get back playing again.

"From there it was about taking it step by step, with small targets all the time. There was no point in thinking: it will be something like 365 days until I play again. Thoughts like that will only get you down. Instead it was about short-term goals. At first it was just being able to walk again. Then it was being able to jog.

"Through it all the club was great at keeping my spirits up. Just after the injury happened Brendan Rodgers phoned me – to hear from the manager of the first team was really encouraging. Then Phil Roscoe [Academy assistant manager and head of education] and Clive Cook [education and welfare officer] always kept me involved by ensuring I went on hospital or community visits with the rest of the team. The injured lads always do more of those activities.

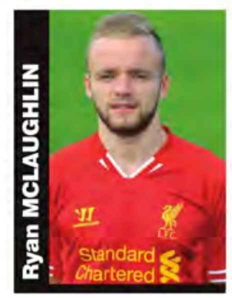
"And as I got nearer to playing I travelled with the squad on matchdays. It made me feel part of it all. To finally play again [against Chelsea U21s in April] was slightly overwhelming.

"Quite often you get niggling injuries when coming back from something more serious. But that doesn't worry me. If I can get through a broken leg I can deal with anything else."

"Reading about the tough times of other sportspeople was a big help"







A first senior cap for Northern Ireland came the way of the 19-year-old full-back against Uruguay in May. He moved to Liverpool from Belfast in the summer of 2011 and spent some of last season on loan at Barnsley.

"Coming here as a 16 year-old tough. I was homesick in the first few months but it was something I just had to get over. Now I look back and think: I only moved from Belfast to Liverpool. Others, such as Marc, have arrived from a lot further away so it must have been really difficult for them to adjust to a different culture, whereas life in Ireland and England is pretty similar.

"If it did affect me there was always someone, such as Clive or Phil or the coaches, to talk to and that always did me some good. I also found that the general atmosphere around the Academy, with so much banter and joking, is good for young players. It keeps people in a positive mood.

"When I went on loan to Barnsley I was still in touch with everyone here. We ended up being relegated and, as you can imagine, being in such a situation meant there was some negativity. I just had to block that out and focus on playing well because I knew that was the only way I could help the team.

"I made nine appearances in the Championship and, despite the team dropping in to League One, that was great experience for me. Although the results obviously didn't go the right way I really enjoyed the competitive nature of the football, the atmosphere and playing in front of crowds. That was exactly what the people here such as [U21s manager] Alex Inglethorpe had hoped I'd gain from the time at Barnsley.

"Some people might view a loan as a bad thing. I didn't see it that way. It's a real chance to test yourself. You see lots of young players going on loan now because Premier League squads are so strong. Not too many players can be like Wayne Rooney or Raheem Sterling who just go straight into the first team while they are teenagers. So you have to go out somewhere else to get playing time, learn and improve.

"If you look at the images around the Academy you realise that even the best, such as Pele, or Roger Federer or Michael Phelps – and they are some of the greatest in their own sports – had to work incredibly hard and go through different experiences to eventually make it. That gives you belief that if you put in the effort and always work hard you can do well too."

"The Liverpool philosophy is simple, and is based on total belief. Maybe that has been the key to Liverpool's consistency. We were taught to go out there, play our own game and fear no one."

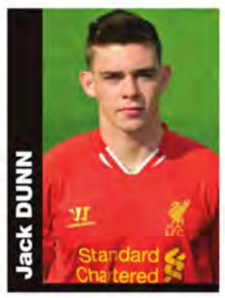
PHIL NEAL

"Success is no accident. It is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice and most of all; love of what you are doing or learning to do."

As a young boy **Pelé** grew up in poverty in Brazil. He earned extra money by working in tea shops as a servant. He could not afford a proper football and usually played with either a sock stuffed with newspaper, tied with a string or a grapefruit. He signed for his first professional team aged 16 and he always gave 110% effort throughout his career. Pele went on to win 3 World Cups with Brazil and to score 1,281 goals in 1,363 matches, making him the greatest goal scorer in football history and considered by many as the greatest soccer player of all.







Scorer of the final goal in our 4-0 friendly win over Shamrock Rovers in May, the local lad is an attacking midfielder and a regular in the Under 21 side. Aged 19, he was 19th man in the squad when we faced Chelsea towards the end of last season.

"I've been at Liverpool since I was a kid, always been a supporter and would love to make it into the first team here," he says.

"During my first year as an Under 18, I tore my hamstring and was out for a month. Within five minutes of coming back it went again. The second time it was a grade-two tear – that's a lot more serious. I couldn't play for five months and the physio said it was one of the worst injuries of those types that he'd seen.

"It meant I obviously missed a lot of the season and the chance to play in the FA Youth Cup. It was a very worrying situation. At that point in your career you usually only have two years with the Under 18s before the club decide to keep you or release you. I was unavailable for a big chunk of that. You want to be out on the field showing your ability, proving you are good enough. Instead you are in the gym doing rehab.

"You could feel isolated. Thankfully people at the Academy reassured me and helped me to progress. They pointed out what others have gone through to make it in different sports.

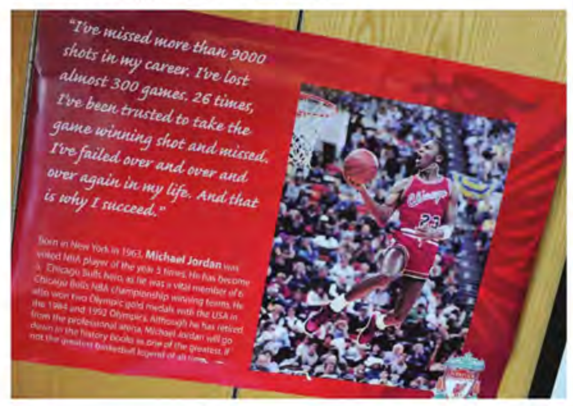
"Some of the quotes or posters I can relate to better than others. I particularly like the Michael Jordan quote. The fact that he missed 9,000 shots really tells you that not everything will go to plan in your career, that sometimes you will be injured or lose a game or miss a chance. What's important is that you keep going and keep doing the right things.

"Thankfully I was kept on here and since then I've progressed and played a lot of games for the U21s last season [top-scoring with 10 goals].

"I've also been up to Melwood to train with the first team. The first few times I was very nervous. I'm a Liverpool fan. I grew up idolising Steven Gerrard. So I was a little starstruck when I got to train with him and other players like Luis Suarez. I think that's natural and getting past it is a challenge.

"But it was made easier to handle by the fact that Stevie came over and introduced himself and welcomed me – he does that with all the young lads. That makes you feel more comfortable and from there I began to settle down.

"Slowly you get used to being in those surroundings and start to play your own game. I've noticed how just working with senior players has helped me already. When I go back down to the U21s I find I'm seeing and doing things quicker than before. Now I want to get to Melwood on a permanent basis."






Gola
31

“HE'S BETTER THAN PLATINI, CERTAINLY BETTER THAN RUMMINEGGE AND MARADONA. FOR ME HE IS THE GREATEST FOOTBALLER IN THE WORLD.”

GRAEME SOUNESS ON KENNY DALGLISH

LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB



Number 44 in Brendan Rodgers' squad, the Australian-born left-back made his senior bow as a second-half substitute against Chelsea at Stamford Bridge last December. Two months previously he'd returned from a long lay-off following an anterior cruciate ligament injury.

"When almost everyone else was away on holiday last summer [2013] I was in here every day working with one of the physios – the physios had holidays too, they just organised them in such a way that one of them was always available to help me through my rehab. I'm sure not every club would provide you with that kind of treatment and it really makes you appreciate being at Liverpool and encourages you to give your all.

"It wasn't just the medical staff that looked after me – it was everyone. People couldn't do enough, I had phone calls from Craig Bellamy and others to wish me well.

"Obviously you just want to be able to play and watching your team-mates – particularly whoever is in your position – doing well is tough. However the atmosphere around the Academy is always very positive. I think that starts with people like Phil and Clive – they always have a friendly word and a joke. That then helps players, whether they are injured, homesick, out-of-form or have another difficulty, to generally remain in a positive mood.

"Scoring for the U21s in my first game back [against Spurs] made all the hours in the gym feel worthwhile. Since then I've continued working hard and, as everyone knows, if you do that the manager will give young players a chance. If he's watching you, maybe in a game here at the Academy or if you go to Melwood, you know you have to impress him. I suppose that brings some pressure. But playing well in front of the boss is a big part of football. If you can't perform when he's there, maybe you haven't got the right mentality.

"Then if he does put you in, you have to perform again. There is no time to relax or think you've made it. Every time you take to the field – be it for training or a game with the U21s or first team – you have to set high standards. If you don't there are other players at the club waiting to get on. It's the kind of pressure you want, the pressure of being a footballer at a top club."

"It wasn't just the medical staff that looked after me – it was everyone here"

Interviews: John Hynes

"Kenny Dalglish was the reason I signed for Liverpool. It was his reputation and his stature in the game that persuaded me and the fact that he gave me a particulary smart pair of boots."

STEVE McMANAMAN


WE
GA
Your essential guide to the new 2014/15 season – all the fixtures, important dates, international breaks and the rest of the sporting calendar. Start planning...
EXIT
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O
GAIN


17

Gary Gillespie, a member of the Liverpool team that won the top-flight title in 1989/90, says: "As a former defender I think most people would expect me to say I'd like to see the side register more clean sheets next season. I'm not so sure about that. Conceding fewer goals would obviously be beneficial but only if it doesn't mean a reduction in our attacking threat.

"Like everyone else I was hugely entertained by the free-flowing, attacking football Brendan had the team playing last season. Every time you went to Anfield you were excited because goals were almost guaranteed, and usually lots of them. We hit three, four or five on a ridiculous number of occasions.

"It was that goalscoring ability which got us in to the title race and helped us to finish second. When you play with such freedom it can mean you leak a few goals at the other end. But becoming tighter at the back at the expense of scoring fewer goals wouldn't be right either. It's about having the correct balance between attack and defence. Brendan has said that on a number of occasions so he'll be trying to implement it.

"Nobody, probably including the manager, expected the team to progress so much last season and be up there in contention for the league. The progress was probably ahead of schedule, so perhaps that is why there was a slight imbalance in the side. I think that the top teams get that balance between defence and attack right after a number of years together and that's obviously what we'll be aiming for.



"To do well in Europe we'll need a strong squad and different options"

"There has been some talk during the summer that we might bring in a new centre-back. I think we're well-stocked in that department and have a few lads in the Under 21s aiming to push on too. This will be Mamadou Sakho's second year here. The first season at a new club is never easy, even more so I'd imagine if you've arrived from a different country. Sakho had a few niggling injuries that meant he was in and out of the side at times. When that happens it's difficult to get in to your rhythm so it was probably a frustrating time for him. If he can stay injury-free, with the experience of a year here behind him, he could be a vital asset.

"Whether we do sign players in that department or not, the fans' expectations have definitely risen. They'll want us to be up there competing again and rightly so. I think we have to approach the league in the same way. We need to get in to the top four before Christmas again and then take it from there.

"That will be more of a challenge because we have Champions League football to play this time. We've obviously been out of the competition for quite a while. Going back into it won't be easy and not too many of the players have a lot of European experience. Having said that, I think we have enough about us to get through the group stages. That would be a good return. From there, who knows? No opponent, even the very best teams such as Real Madrid or Bayern Munich, will relish coming to Anfield.

"If we're to do well in Europe we'll need to have a strong squad and different options. I think Rickie Lambert definitely provides something new for the manager. He is very different to the striking choices we already had. When you put him alongside Luis Suarez, Daniel Sturridge and Raheem Sterling, that is a great blend of attackers to choose from.

"I didn't know much about Lambert until he made it to the Premier League with Southampton a few years ago. Since then he's really impressed me. He might not be blessed with amazing pace, but we already have players with that asset. His game is based more on technical ability and in that area he is absolutely superb. His touch is assured and he can score goals. With so many fixtures, opportunities to play will definitely come his way and I'm sure he'll take them. I think he can make a big impact."



Rickie Lambert will add a new technical dimension upfront

AUGUST

Sun 10 FA Community Shield
Tues 12 UEFA Super Cup
Fri 15 Start of England v India 5th test match (Oval)

SAT 16 SOUTHAMPTON (H)
STATBLAST: since their return to the Premier League in 2012, Saints have won twice and lost twice v the Reds

SAT 23 MAN CITY (A)
Glen Johnson's birthday (30)
STATBLAST: including their record at Maine Road, Liverpool have beaten City 32 times away from home; City have won 28, with 22 draws
Mon 25 Bank Holiday
Thurs 28 20 years since Robbie Fowler scored fastest PL hat-trick (against Arsenal at Anfield)

SAT 30 TOTTENHAM (A)
STATBLAST: Spurs-Liverpool games have seen the joint-most penalties in Premier League history – 17 with 11 at Anfield
Sun 31 British MotoGP (Silverstone)

SEPTEMBER

Tues 2 101st anniversary of Bill Shankly's birthday
Thurs 4 Everton Ladies v Liverpool Ladies

INTERNATIONAL BREAK

Mon 8 Switzerland v England EURO 2016 qualifier

SAT 13 ASTON VILLA (H)
STATBLAST: Villa have a solid record at Anfield in recent times, with just one loss in their last five visits
Tues/Wed 16/17 UEFA Champions League Matchday 1

SAT 20 WEST HAM (A)
STATBLAST: eight of the last nine meetings between these teams have produced at least 3 goals, including last season's encounter at Upton Park
Wed 24 Capital One Cup third round
Fri 26 Start of Ryder Cup (Gleneagles)

SAT 27 EVERTON (H)
STATBLAST: Everton have not won on any of their last 14 trips to Anfield, with seven draws and seven defeats in that time
Sun 28 Oakland Raiders v Miami Dolphins NFL International Series (Wembley)
Tues/Wed 30/1 UEFA Champions League Matchday 2

OCTOBER

SAT 4 WEST BROM (H)
STATBLAST: in scoring three goals during this fixture last season Luis Suarez upped his ratio of hat-tricks to one every 20 Premier League games
Sun 5 Arsenal Ladies v Liverpool Ladies

INTERNATIONAL BREAK

Thurs 9 England v San Marino EURO 2016 qualifier
Sat 11 Super League grand final (Old Trafford)
Sun 12 Estonia v England EURO 2016 qualifier



Red-hot Robbie's hat-trick in 1994

Sat 27 September is derby day!


Anfield welcomes Southampton first




Rushie's birthday on 20 October


Will there be a goalfest on Tyneside on 1 November?

SAT 18 QUEENS PARK RANGERS (A)
STATBLAST: in their last trip to Loftus Road the Reds won 3-0 with goals from Luis Suarez (two) and Daniel Agger
Mon 20 Ian Rush's birthday (53)
Tues/Wed 21/22 UEFA Champions League Matchday 3
SAT 25 HULL CITY (H)
STATBLAST: Liverpool have won eight and lost none of nine previous home games against the Tigers in all competitions, scoring at least twice on every occasion
Sun 26 Atlanta Falcons v Detroit Lions NFL International Series (Wembley)
Wed 29 Capital One Cup fourth round

NOVEMBER

SAT 1 NEWCASTLE UTD (A)
STATBLAST: not one of the 38 Premier League games between Newcastle and Liverpool has finished goalless
Tues/Wed 4/5 UEFA Champions League Matchday 4
Fri 7 John Barnes' birthday (51)
SAT 8 CHELSEA (H)
STATBLAST: in this fixture last season, despite losing Liverpool enjoyed 72 per cent possession – their greatest margin of the campaign
Sun 9 Jacksonville Jaguars v Dallas Cowboys NFL International Series (Wembley)

INTERNATIONAL BREAK

Sat 15 England v Slovenia EURO 2016 qualifier
Sun 16 Barclays ATP World Tour tennis final (The O2)
SAT 22 CRYSTAL PALACE (A)
STATBLAST: in the last eight meetings between the sides Palace have won four, with three lost and one draw
Tues/Wed 25/26 UEFA Champions League Matchday 5
SAT 29 STOKE CITY (H)
STATBLAST: last season this fixture was Liverpool's first opening-day win at Anfield since 2001

DECEMBER

TUES 2 LEICESTER CITY (A)
STATBLAST: in their last six encounters stretching back to 1997, Liverpool have won only once at Leicester City
Thurs 4 15 years since Steven Gerrard scored first LFC goal
SAT 6 SUNDERLAND (H)
STATBLAST: last season this was the first time that Liverpool's team bus was greeted before the game by fans along Anfield Road
Mon 8 Raheem Sterling's birthday (20)
Tues/Wed 9/10 UEFA Champions League Matchday 6
SAT 13 MAN UNITED (A)
STATBLAST: Liverpool have scored in all 12 league meetings with United since 2008/09

Terry McDermott believes Liverpool's squad of entertainers are well-equipped to serve up another feast of attacking football in 2014/15. The former Reds midfielder won six league titles during his spell with the club and was later part of the managerial set-up at Newcastle United in the 1990s.

"I'm sure the players and the manager's expectations are going to be that 'we can do this' as they were so close last year," he says. "No-one expected Liverpool to have the season they did. Yes, they were expected to go from seventh the year before to maybe the Champions League qualifying places. But to go and do what they did was almost beyond belief and some of the football they produced was exquisite.

"I went to the Manchester City game in April. Believe it or not it was the first time I'd been to Anfield in eight years and to see the performance in the first half that day reminded me of the heady days of the Newcastle teams of 1994, 95, 96. In those days Newcastle were the entertainers and people have rightly said that Liverpool have taken over that mantle. If there was any justice in the world, Liverpool should have won it last year just as Newcastle should have won it in 95/96 too. Those teams were a breath of fresh air."

There have been suggestions that the Reds will find it hard to match last season's exploits. As well as having the demands of Champions League football to contend with in 2014/15, it is expected that Chelsea and Manchester United will be stronger



"The team will only get better. Can they win it next year – why not?"

while Arsenal are also back on the trophy trail following their FA Cup success.

But Terry feels last season's experiences will also benefit Liverpool. "There's no reason why we can't look forward to more of the same next season. I don't look at any team and think: we can't beat them. The really encouraging thing is that the team will only get better. If they are able to bring in better players, the confidence in the existing squad will be higher as a result of what they achieved last time, and as long as you can keep your main players injury-free then I believe they won't be far away.

"Of course it's important to keep your Suarezs, Sturridges and Sterlings fit, but the one man they can't afford to lose through injury or suspension is Steven Gerrard. My biggest wish for next season is that he will be ever-present.

"For me, he is in the same category as Kevin Keegan and Kenny Dalglish and maybe even beyond them



The atmosphere at the Man City game was overwhelming

because while Kevin and Kenny played in teams that won things year in, year out, Steven has carried Liverpool for much of the last 10 years. Now players such as Suarez have helped take the burden away from him. If there is one person we can ill afford to lose, it is him. I've never seen a player like him. You've got your Messis and Ronaldos who are absolutely fantastic at going past people and scoring magnificent goals, but Steven has it all. He's changed his game slightly to be more defensive-thinking but that just serves to illustrate his quality. I honestly can't think of one thing he can't do. To be fair, I've never seen him keep goal, but if he can prove adept at that then he'll still be worth a lot of money!"

Another factor in LFC's title challenge last season was strong home form. Backed by a noisy Anfield, Liverpool collected 49 points from a possible 57 in front of the Kop. Terry believes the 12th Man will again be come into the equation. "I just could not believe the noise the crowd created at the Manchester City game. It was deafening. I bumped into Dave Johnson and said: 'Listen Doc, did they used to make that noise when we were playing?' He said: 'Yes – and more, because don't forget there were 28,000 standing up on the Kop at one time. Can you imagine the noise they made?' Because you're in a bubble and concentrating when you're playing, you hear a noise but you don't really hear what they're saying because you're in that zone.

"It would have been a dream to win it last season. It wasn't to be but the players, the manager and the staff should be really proud of the way the team went so close.

"In the late 70s and early 80s we genuinely felt we couldn't be beaten because we knew we were a good team. If the present squad shows that belief next year and Brendan adds to what is already a very good squad, going through what they experienced last season will serve them well. I am really looking forward to seeing the team's future unfold. Can they win it next year – why not?"


Standard
Chartered
LFC


Leicester away on 2 December


Raheem's birthday on 8 December


African Cup of Nations is coming


Can the Reds win on Wearside on 10 January?

Sun 14 BBC Sports Personality of the Year (SSE Hydro Glasgow)
Wed 17 Capital One Cup fifth round
SAT 20 ARSENAL (H)
FIFA Club World Cup final (Marrakesh)
STATBLAST: in the previous four seasons Arsenal have won just 2 of 20 trips to top-six finishers (W2 D6 L12)
Thurs 25 Christmas Day
FRI 26 BURNLEY (A)
STATBLAST: in 2005 an own-goal from Djimi Traore helped the Clarets knock Liverpool out of the FA Cup in the third round
SUN 28 SWANSEA CITY (H)
STATBLAST: Liverpool have won two of six meetings with Swansea City since 2011/12

JANUARY

THURS 1 LEICESTER CITY(H)
STATBLAST: Bill Shankly was so impressed by Leicester's new 4-4-2 system in the 1960s, he adopted the formation with Liverpool
Sat 3 FA Cup third round
Sun 4 World Professional Darts final (Lakeside)
SAT 10 SUNDERLAND (A)
STATBLAST: Sunderland have won only three of their 26 Premier League games against Liverpool all of them at the Stadium of Light
SAT 17 ASTON VILLA (A)
STATBLAST: Villa have won just one of their last 16 league home games against Liverpool (D5 L10)
Wed 21 Capital One Cup semi-final first leg
Fri 23 96th anniversary of Bob Paisley's birthday
Sat 24 FA Cup fourth round
Luis Suarez birthday (28)
Mon 26 Brendan Rodgers' birthday (42)
Wed 28 Capital One Cup semi-final second leg
SAT 31 WEST HAM (H)
STATBLAST: the Hammers have failed to beat Liverpool at Anfield since 1963 – they've lost 30 of the subsequent 41 trips

FEBRUARY

Sun 1 Australian Open men's tennis final (Melbourne Park) / Super Bowl XLIX (University of Phoenix Stadium Arizona)
Fri 6 Start of Rugby Union RBS 6 Nations
SAT 7 EVERTON (A)
STATBLAST: Liverpool have won 8 and lost just 1 of the last 16 derbies
Sun 8 African Cup of Nations final (Marrakesh)
TUES 10 TOTTENHAM (H)
STATBLAST: last season Spurs conceded 25 goals in their six games against last season's top three, scoring just twice
Sat 14 FA Cup fifth round
Australia v England ICC World Cup one-day match (Melbourne)
Tues/Wed 17/18 UEFA Champions League round of 16 first leg

Q&A with former Reds boss Roy Evans...

"The focus has to be on the job in hand, looking forward and not backwards"

Having gone so close last season – and having been a manager yourself at Liverpool in a similar situation – what will be the message to the players when they return for pre-season?

You have to take all the positives from last season because there are many: the results, the style of the football, the number of goals. Our original target was qualifying for the Champions League and we did that with games to spare before going very, very close to winning the league. The margin was fine. You have to remind them of all that.

But you also have to remind them that the reality is: it counts for nothing now. The hard work starts again. Just because you were a good team last year it does not mean you're a good team this year. You have to show the same effort and the same desire. It's not a time to say: we're back in the Champions League – we're good. Even when you win something – even the league – that has to be the message if you want sustained success. It counts for everyone at the club: the players, the staff and the fans. The focus has to be on the job in hand, looking forward and not backwards.

Given the course of events at the end of last season, will it be difficult for the players to get over that?

You address it by talking about it but not dwell. It's important to remember that we were only in control of the situation for a relatively short period of time. It doesn't sit easy with me when someone says Liverpool surrendered the title because the team was only top for a couple of weeks after an unbelievable effort to get there in the first place. We put ourselves in the frame by a run that few others sides in recent history could match. We'd played some outstanding football and got undone in one match against Chelsea when maybe we pushed a little bit too much.

But there's no point trying to be clever with hindsight. It's important to remember we are a positive team and it's very difficult to change it at the end when it has brought you so much success previously. Obviously there will be disappointment we never quite pulled it off but if Brendan gets all the targets he wants in the transfer market, will increase competition among the squad and get the players firing again.

When you were manager, did it give the squad a lift when you signed a new player?

Without a doubt – you have to improve every season. In football you can't believe you have a ceiling. There's always a way to improve or adjust your game. I'd say it's even more important to get the recruitment right when you're at the top because you soon find games become more difficult because other teams mark your card and are out to beat you. You become an even greater scalp.

So given that Liverpool have more games this season with the Champions League – as well as the desire to do as well if not better in the league – it's essential that Brendan is allowed to operate in the market with a bit of freedom. When you sign a new quality player, suddenly other players are looking over their shoulder. It's important to keep every one on their toes while also giving the top, top players at the club a bit of hope that we've got a better chance of silverware.

When you are preparing the team for a campaign that includes Europe, how is it different to one that doesn't?

Planning. You have the old chestnut that you've got to take one game at a time. It's important that the players see it like that, but as manager you have to be thinking about the bigger picture: day by day, month by month, year by year. When you're Liverpool manager you have to try and do well in each competition and try and use the players that suit certain fixtures. It makes me laugh in many ways, though, because we've spent a lot of time worrying about not being in the Champions League and suddenly now we're in it, people are talking about all these problems even though we're desperate to be there. Ultimately you've got to go and enjoy it.

I think that we've got a team that will enjoy it and one that has the potential to be very successful. Okay, at times we'll need to be a bit tighter in terms our approach, but I think that will come as the team develops and becomes more streetwise with experience. It's easy to forget that this is still a very young side.



The Reds can enjoy and learn from the Champions League



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SAT 21 SOUTHAMPTON (A)
STATBLAST: this fixture should see the return of former Saints striker Rickie Lambert to St Mary's – he scored 117 goals in 235 games for Saints
Tues/Wed 24/25 UEFA Champions League round of 16 second leg
SAT 28 MAN CITY (H)
STATBLAST: 7 of the 8 meetings between these teams since 2010/11 have had at least 3 goals

MARCH

Sun 1 Capital One Cup final
TUES 3 BURNLEY (H)
STATBLAST: these teams have only met twice during the Premier League era with Liverpool winning 4-0 home and away in 2009/10
Wed 4 Kenny Dalglish's birthday (64)
Fri 6 Simon Mignolet's birthday (27)
Sat 7 FA Cup quarter-finals
SAT 14 SWANSEA CITY (A)
Joe Allen's birthday (25)
STATBLAST: Steven Gerrard captained Liverpool for the 400th time in this fixture in September last season
SAT 21 MAN UNITED (H)
STATBLAST: last season's defeat in this fixture marked the 13th time a team managed by David Moyes had failed to win at Anfield
INTERNATIONAL BREAK
Fri 27 England v Lithuania EURO 2016 qualifier
Sun 29 ICC World Cup final (Melbourne)

APRIL

Fri 3 Good Friday
SAT 4 ARSENAL (A)
STATBLAST: since 2007/08 Liverpool have won just 2 of 13 league meetings with Arsenal and the Gunners have scored in 16 of their last 17 league head-to-heads
Mon 6 Easter Monday
Start of Masters Golf (Augusta)
Thurs 9 Robbie Fowler's birthday (40)
Fri 10 Ian Callaghan's birthday (73)
SAT 11 NEWCASTLE UTD (H)
Grand National (Aintree)
BNY Mellon Boat Race (London)
STATBLAST: Newcastle have scored first in six of the last eight meetings between these teams
Tues/Wed 14/15 UEFA Champions League quarter-finals first leg
Wed 15 26th anniversary of Hillsborough tragedy
SAT 18 HULL CITY (A)
FA CUP semi-finals
STATBLAST: Hull's victory over Liverpool in the corresponding fixture last season was their first victory over the Reds in any competition, ever (D4 L12)
Tues/Wed 21/22 UEFA Champions League quarter-finals second leg
SAT 25 WEST BROM (A)
STATBLAST: Baggies defender Jonas Olsson attempted more clearances



A decade since the miracle of Istanbul

King Kenny's birthday on 4 March

Steven Gerrard, UEFA Champions League winner, 25 May 2005

than any other player in the Premier League last season
Sun 26 Virgin London Marathon
Tues 28 25 years since Liverpool FC's last top-flight title

MAY

Fri 1 50 years since Liverpool FC's first FA Cup win
SAT 2 QUEENS PARK RANGERS (H)
STATBLAST: QPR's last visit to Anfield marked Jamie Carragher's final game as a Liverpool player, May 2013
Mon 4 World Snooker Championship final (Crucible Sheffield)
Tues/Wed 5/6 UEFA Champions League semi-finals first leg
SAT 9 CHELSEA (A)
STATBLAST: Liverpool's record victory in this fixture came during the 1989/1990 season, winning 5-2
Tues/Wed 12/13 UEFA Champions League semi-finals second leg
SAT 16 CRYSTAL PALACE (H)
STATBLAST: Steven Gerrard's penalty in last season's fixture meant he'd scored in each of the last 15 seasons
Sat 23 Football League 2 play-off final
SUN 24 STOKE CITY (A)
Football League 1 play-off final
STATBLAST: last season Liverpool won here for the first time in the Premier League era – it was also Steven Gerrard's 650th appearance for the club
Mon 25 Bank Holiday
10 years since LFC won UEFA Champions League
F League Championship play-off final
Wed 27 UEFA Europa League final (Warsaw)
Sat 30 FA Cup final

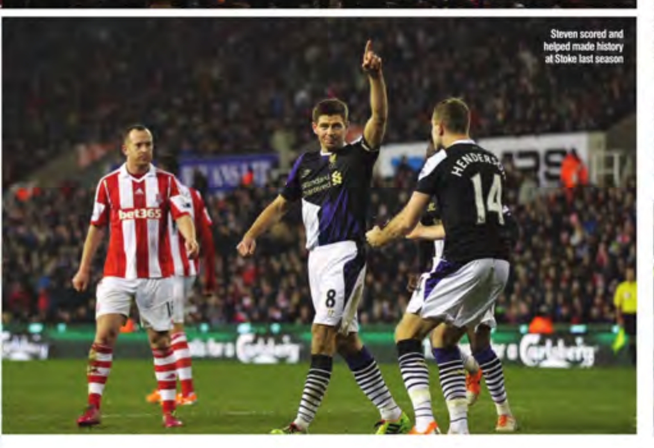
JUNE

Sat 6 UEFA Champions League final (Berlin)
Sun 7 Rep of Ireland v England International friendly

All kick-off times are BST.
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Half-a-century ago these men made history


Berlin: hosting the Champions League final in early June



Steven scored and helped made history at Stoke last season



The Originals

The class of 2013/14 wasn't the first in Liverpool's history to score a century of goals

The day he was appointed as the new manager of Liverpool FC, Brendan Rodgers posed for a photo-shoot next to a plaque of John McKenna, the club's formative joint secretary-manager. Fittingly it was under McKenna's leadership that Liverpool last scored 100 league goals in one season – way back in 1895/96. The team played in blue-and-white halves then, and this is their story.

The context

After one season in the Lancashire League the club was accepted into the Football League Division Two and immediately won the title. They subsequently found it tough in the top division and were relegated straight back to the second tier. Ahead of the 1895/96 campaign McKenna and William Barclay set about fulfilling owner John Houlding's ambition of regaining a place among the elite.

The signings

There was significant player movement, in and out, ahead of the new season. Right-back Archie Goldie joined from Clyde and would form a consistent partnership with his countryman Tom Wilkie on the opposite flank. Wilkie had arrived from Hearts the previous January a few days before Billy Dunlop signed from Abercorn. Dunlop would become a mainstay of the team's backline for 14 years, making 363 appearances.

In attack much hope centred on the controversial £60 addition of Fred Geary from Everton. Inside-left Frank Becton also bolstered the five-man frontline, arriving from Preston North End. But it was the £100 move for George Allan that would prove most important. In today's money the fee would be around £8,000.

The season

A remarkable campaign saw the Reds net 106 goals in their 30 league fixtures. Incredibly 65 were scored in the 15 games at Anfield. Ironically it was Manchester City who finished level on points, although Liverpool were placed top as a result of their markedly better goal-average. Back then finishing top did not guarantee promotion. Liverpool needed to play a post-season Test Match series against the two lowest-placed teams in Division One for the right to go up.

The marksman

George Allan was a goal-hungry 20-year-old when he was recruited from Leith Athletic. The Luis Suarez of his day, he went on to score 25 goals in 20 games and another three in the all-important Test matches. Nicknamed 'Dod', he netted 56 goals in 96 games for Liverpool in two spells either side of a stint at Celtic.

Incredibly 65 goals were scored in 15 games at Anfield

Prior to the start of the 1899/00 season it was reported that Allan was too ill for training. Then-manager Tom Watson lamented: "Diseased lungs are not cured in a day." Tragically, Allan died of tuberculosis in Fife in October that year, aged 24. The other four most-used forwards that season also died young: Harry Bradshaw, aged 26 in 1899; Jimmy Ross, 36 in 1902; Malcolm McVean, 36 in 1907; and Frank Becton, also 36 in 1909.

The scores

Liverpool scored over five goals in a game on seven occasions.

Centre-forward Harry Bradshaw

Chief among them was the 10-1 victory over Rotherham Town on 18 February – a result that remains the club's biggest league win. Anfield regulars also enjoyed handsome successes against Crewe Alex (6-1), Lincoln City (6-1), Burton Swifts (6-1) and Newton Heath (7-1). The team was no less ruthless on their travels with Crewe put to the sword again at Nantwich Road (7-0) while Burton Swifts suffered the same fate.

While Suarez, Daniel Sturridge and Steven Gerrard all hit double figures in 2013/14, five Liverpool players achieved the feat in 1895/96. Alongside Allan there were impressive contributions from Jimmy Ross (23), Becton (18), Harry Bradshaw and Geary (both 11).

The Test of nerve

Liverpool put themselves into a commanding position for promotion with a 4-0 win over Small Heath (now Birmingham City) at Anfield in their opening Test match. The return fixture ended in a goalless draw with the local press reporting that the train journey took almost four hours for the Monday evening fixture. A crowd of 20,000 then packed into Anfield for the next match of the series against West Brom with Liverpool winning 2-0 thanks to goals

FOOTBALL.

THE LEAGUE TEST MATCHES.

The following table shows the results of the test matches:—

	Played.	Won.	Lost.	Drn.	Goals For.	Goals Agst.	Pts.
Liverpool	4	2	1	1	6	2	5
West Brom. Albion	4	2	1	1	9	4	5
Small Heath	4	1	2	1	8	7	3
Manchester City	4	1	2	1	5	15	3

LIVERPOOL v. WEST BROMWICH ALBION.—The last of the test matches between these clubs was played last evening on the West Bromwich Albion ground. The weather turned out wet as the time for making a start approached, and naturally the gate was anything but abnormal. Battles and M'Vean were both unfit to play consequent upon injuries received in Saturday's game, and Wilkie and Geary took their places respectively in the Liverpool team. The Albion played the same side as was defeated at Anfield on Saturday, with the exception of Perry, who played right half back, which left Banks in his old position as left outside forward, the teams lining up as follows:—

LIVERPOOL.—Storer, goal; Goldie and Wilkie, backs;



from Bradshaw and Allan. The Baggies won the return by the same scoreline and preserved their top-flight status, while Liverpool joined them in the higher division.

The boss

Despite playing his part in leading the team back to the top division, John McKenna was always seen as something of a visionary. Ahead of Liverpool's return it was announced that he'd persuaded Sunderland's successful secretary-manager Tom Watson to leave Wearside for Merseyside and oversee team affairs.

Brendan Rodgers with the 'Honest' John McKenna plaque

The one-man team

The remarkable Matt McQueen was famed for playing in every position during his career with Liverpool. He began this particular campaign in goal, and although Harry Storer arrived in December 1895, McQueen still racked up 22 league appearances. Most of them came between the sticks but in the second half of the season he also appeared in the half-back line!

Regular line-up (2-3-5)

McQueen,Goldie, Wilkie,McCartney McQue, Holmes,McVean, Ross, Allan, Becton, Bradshaw.

Final table 1895/96

	P	W	D	L	F	A	G Av	Pts
Liverpool	30	22	2	6	106	32	3.31	46
Man City	30	21	4	5	63	38	1.66	46
Grimsby	30	20	2	8	82	38	2.16	42
Burton W	30	19	4	7	69	40	1.73	42
Newcastle	30	16	2	12	73	50	1.46	34
Newton H	30	15	3	12	66	57	1.16	33
Woolwich A	30	14	4	12	59	42	1.40	32
Leicester F	30	14	4	12	57	44	1.30	32
Darwen	30	12	6	12	72	67	1.08	30
Notts C	30	12	2	16	57	54	1.06	26
Burton S	30	10	4	16	39	69	0.57	24
L'borough	30	9	5	16	40	67	0.60	23
Lincoln C	30	9	4	17	53	75	0.71	22
Burslem PV	30	7	4	19	43	78	0.55	18
Rotherham T	30	7	3	20	34	97	0.35	17
Crewe Alex	30	5	3	22	30	95	0.32	13



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Neil MELLOR

A way to help talented young players truly fulfil their potential

When I made my debut for Liverpool against Ipswich in a League Cup tie at Anfield in 2002, I was earning £500 a week, driving a Renault Clio.

To be playing for Liverpool was an ambition fulfilled. It was a good wage and more than enough to sustain a healthy standard of living. I thought I was the luckiest person in the world.

If I was breaking into the first team of a football club now – 12 years later – I wonder what my contract would be like. I have no doubt that financially it would be more lucrative than it was. But that does not necessarily mean it would've been to my benefit in the long-term. I appreciated then – as I do now – how fortunate I was to be getting paid for something I loved. It kept me hungry too because I knew how far away I was from being an established first-team player.

There has been a lot of discussion recently about the state of English football since the national team's early exit from the World Cup. Currently there are not enough youngsters developing into top-quality players. There are many reasons and they're linked by one overriding influence – money, and attitudes towards it.

When I was a teenager in Liverpool's youth system the message was clear: if you play well, develop the right way and make your mark, you'll eventually be rewarded. Football was a fair industry in that sense. In the last decade the sport's acceleration into a business has been staggering. Lots of clubs have attempted to sign players young and sell them at 29 or 30 just after their peak for a profit. While this may safeguard the club's financial interests it also has a negative impact.

"Players must stay motivated between the crucial ages of 18 and 21"



Clubs are terrified of missing out on the next big thing so they reward their young players. Quite often it's too much too soon. With the right guidance, a few – like Raheem Sterling – still manage to progress and become the player they were expected to be. But for every Sterling, there are many who lack the motivation to continue on the path that once seemed obvious. All of the good work that has gone on before is lost.

Every person is entitled to earn money. But it would be better for the game if a cap was introduced whereby players can only earn so much until they have established themselves, having played 100 or so games. It would be beneficial to have contracts where pay is backdated. It keeps players motivated between the real growing-up ages of 18 and 21 where they mature and understand the responsibilities of being a footballer.

The sacking culture of managers hasn't helped either. The demand for instant results has resulted in few managers being able to give young players their opportunity. When times are hard, it's a tried and trusted method to look for the experience that will get you out of a hole.

That's why Liverpool supporters are very fortunate to have Brendan Rodgers as their manager as well as a strong, solid owner. Rodgers has championed young players more than any other manager at top-level British football. Sterling is an example of that. He was England's most exciting player at the World Cup but it's easy to forget how difficult it's been in the last 18 months establishing himself in Liverpool's first team after signing a new contract. There were occasions where other managers may have pulled him out, yet Rodgers persisted with him and now, the player, the club and the country have benefited greatly.

Rodgers has made those decisions with the full backing of owners that realised success wasn't going to be achieved overnight. The player, the manager and the club have been able to develop with that confidence.

Follow Neil on Twitter @NeilMellor33



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The KOP

The bit at the back for Liverpool's legions of fans at home and all over the world...

THE SHOW MUST GO ON!

Smash-hit stage show *The Official Story of Liverpool Football Club* is back by popular demand – with a three-night special at the Echo Arena in Liverpool in August followed by a run at Belfast's Odyssey Arena. See page 85.











Here to help – the Liverpool Football Club Supporters' Committee...

NEVER TALK ALONE



Season Ticket Holders and Hospitality: Bob Humphries Email: Standhospitality-supporters @liverpoolfcsc.com



Disabled Supporters: Jeanette Dodd Email: Disabled-Supporters @liverpoolfcsc.com



LGBT Supporters: Paul Amann Email: LGBT-Supporters @liverpoolfcsc.com



Female Fans: Sam Armstrong Email: Female-Supporters @liverpoolfcsc.com



International fans (East): Matthew Selby Email: International-east @liverpoolfcsc.com



Ethnic Minority Supporters: Abu Nasir Email: Ethnic-Minority-Supporters @liverpoolfcsc.com





Honorary President: Karen Gill
Email: HonoraryPresident@liverpoolfcsc.com

The Liverpool Football Club Supporters' Committee was set up to help improve communications between fans and the club, and its 12 members represent all of the major constituencies among our supporter base.

Its long-term aims are threefold: to enhance the relationship between Liverpool Football Club and our supporters; to help ensure fans feel their loyalty is valued by Liverpool FC; and to help improve Liverpool FC for the benefit of all supporters.

The committee currently meets four times a season in Liverpool with senior club staff. The owners do aim to attend a couple of meetings each season too. During meetings the committee discusses the issues and asks the questions that most affect them and the fans they represent. Minutes from each meeting are published online within seven days of the meeting ending.

Most recently there was a fans forum on Friday 9 May at The Sandon pub close to the stadium where supporters had the opportunity to raise points regarding the redevelopment of Anfield and its wider area.

If you have a question or something you would like raised, please contact the relevant member via email.



Please note that committee members will not be able to reply to every correspondence and more urgent day-to-day questions should be directed to the club.

Follow us on Twitter **@LFCSupCom**





Non Season Ticket Holders & Official Members: Laurie Whitehead
Email: nonsthandmembers@liverpoolfcsc.com



Official Supporters' Clubs: Richard Pedder
Email: LFC-Official-Supporters-Clubs@liverpoolfcsc.com

Families & Young People: Laura Woodcock
Email: Family-Supporters@liverpoolfcsc.com



Fans who attend away games: Anna Burgess
Email: away-game-supporters@liverpoolfcsc.com



International fans (West): Damien Moore
Email: International-west@liverpoolfcsc.com



Fans in the Merseyside area: James Benson
Email: Merseyside-Supporters@liverpoolfcsc.com

The month

HEALTH BOOST

Liverpool Ladies will wear a new logo on the back of their shirts as part of a new partnership. The Reds have signed a three-year deal with health and life insurer PruHealth and PruProtect. LFC's chief commercial officer Billy Hogan said: "We're thrilled to bring PruHealth and PruProtect on board. Their ambition to promote healthy and active lifestyles across the nation fits in well with LFC and the work we're doing in communities across the globe."



GET YOUR 13/14 MEGAMAG NOW

Have you got your copy of *WE ARE LIVERPOOL* yet? The official 116-page review of season 2013/14 re-lives nine exhilarating months, game by game, from Mignolet's last-minute penalty save v Stoke, to the strikes by Agger and Sturridge v Newcastle that took the goals-for total into three figures for only the second time in the club's history. Available from club stores and **www.programmemaster.com**.



DON'T MISS ANY OF THE BUILD-UP ON LFC TV

ahead

FENWAY FIXTURE

Ahead of the Guinness International Champions Cup later in the month, Liverpool return to Fenway Park, home of the Boston Red Sox. They will play AS Roma in a repeat of a pre-season fixture played at the venue two years ago. The match will take place on Wednesday 23 July.

GUINNESS CUP

The Reds are one of eight teams taking part in the 2014 Guinness International Champions Cup in the USA and Canada. There are two groups of four. Each team will play three matches and the two group leaders will face off on 4 August in the final at Sun Life Stadium in Miami. Liverpool start against Olympiacos on 27 July at Soldier Field, Chicago, play Manchester City at the Yankee Stadium in New York on 30 July, then AC Milan in Charlotte, North Carolina on 2 August.



DERBY DUEL

After finishing their Continental Cup group games, Liverpool Ladies return to league action with a derby duel against Everton at the Select Security Stadium on 16 July before visits to Bristol Academy on 19 July and Manchester City on 27 July. Matt Beard's side is set to include new signing Nina Frausing (right), a Danish Under 23s centre-back.



NEW SEASON TO START IN DENMARK

The Reds kick off their pre-season programme with a friendly at Denmark's most popular football club, Brondby IF, who celebrate their 50th anniversary.

The two sides will kick-off at 6pm local time on Wednesday 16 July at the home of the Danish Superliga club, Brondby Stadion (above).

Liverpool FC and Brondby have previously met three times with the last clash being almost ten years ago in the 1995/96 UEFA Cup when Dan Eggen's goal at Anfield gave the Danes a 1-0 aggregate victory.

The Reds have a large following across Denmark, with over 80,000 Danish fans following the club's official Facebook account. Liverpool FC vice-captain and skipper of the Denmark international team, Daniel Agger, transferred from Brondby to LFC in the 2006/07 season and has helped build the profile of the Reds across his homeland.

Liverpool were close to signing a Brondby player in 1983 with Michael Laudrup having since revealed he was poised to join the Reds after shaking hands on a three-year contract. But when Liverpool insisted upon increasing the length of the deal by an extra 12 months, the move collapsed and the gifted attacker went to Juventus instead.

"Liverpool were my team as a kid. I watched them as a kid on television back home in Denmark," he said.

Brondby sports director Per Rud can't wait for the game: "We look forward to welcoming Liverpool FC at Brondby. Liverpool is one of the world's biggest and most popular clubs, and we hope that a great deal of Brondby IF's fans and also Scandinavian fans of LFC will take part in this unique experience at Brondby Stadium. Liverpool FC is an important part of our club's history, and this friendly is therefore a perfect way to mark Brondby IF's 50th anniversary and an ideal last pre-season match for our squad to prepare for 2014/15."



Brondby old boy Daniel Agger with skipper Stevie

DEEPDALE DATE



The Reds continue their pre-season programme with a trip to Preston North End on Saturday, 19 July (3pm). The fixture at Deepdale brings together two sides who hold a shared bond – the legendary former Reds manager Bill Shankly. Shankly is revered at Preston too after dedicating 16 years of his playing career to the Lancashire team and his image adorns one of the stands at the stadium. Twelve months ago Liverpool began their pre-season campaign with a 4-0 win at Deepdale. LFC have received 4,950 stand tickets for the fixture and fans should visit www.liverpoolfc.com for the latest information.


FREEBETS.C

PRE-SEASON ON LFCTV

After a summer spent at the World Cup, or taking some much-needed rest, Liverpool's first-team players begin pre-season training in July.

LFCTV will bring you coverage of all pre-season games, which you can watch live online. There will be pre-match build-up and post-match analysis of every game, as well as delayed coverage of the matches on TV.

The action gets underway in Copenhagen on 16 July as the Reds visit Brondby to help celebrate the Danish club's 50th anniversary. Three days later Liverpool play at Preston North End before jetting off on their US tour. A dedicated team will follow the Reds' every move to bring you behind-the-scenes coverage from America, as well as interviews with all your favourite players. Brendan Rodgers' men face Roma on 23 July in Boston, before three matches in the International Champions Cup. This starts with Olympiakos in Chicago (27 July), followed by Premier League champions Manchester City in New York's Yankee Stadium (30 July) and Italian giants AC Milan in Charlotte (2 Aug).

July will also see LFC News hit your screens from the 14th. This will bring you all the latest goings-on from Melwood as the boys get ready for the new campaign.

The Ladies' team also return to action after a mid-season break. Catch up with their progress on special shows on 10 and 24 July.

Like the players, our team have been working hard for the new season, with favourites such as Pressbox, #LFCWORLD and Anfield 360 all returning in August.

LFC TV is on Sky channel 429 or Virgin channel 544. For full listings visit www.liverpoolfc.com.







LFC MUST-SEE

Fancy a great late summer night-out with a Mighty Reds flavour? Then don't miss *The Official Story of Liverpool Football Club* – coming soon to Liverpool and Belfast.

When the show ran in March this year at Liverpool's Royal Court it got rave reviews from critics and audiences alike. As a result, the play that covers the club's 120-year history has been taken to another level in its home city – now it's set to be staged in front of an audience of 3,500 people in the Echo Arena's second auditorium, Echo Two. Then it makes its debut at Belfast's Odyssey Arena for a three-night run, giving over 10,000 fans in Ireland the chance to see the hit spectacle.

The show brings to life the club's incredible history, documenting the days of Elisha Scott, Albert Stubbins and Billy Liddell to Kenny Dalglish, Steven Gerrard and Brendan Rodgers. With access to the LFC archive, writer Nicky Allt has created a show that will make fans laugh, cry and cheer.

He'd already enjoyed massive success with the play *One Night in Istanbul*, which has subsequently been adapted into a film due to be released in cinemas later this year, as well as being co-writer *Brick Up The Mersey Tunnels*. "It was always my intention to take The Official Story to a bigger audience and now is the time," says Nicky. "I've had such positive feedback from supporters, as well as many people saying that they missed the chance to see it last time around."

Among the cast are Mark Moraghan (Brookside, Holby City), Jake Abraham (Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels) and theatre favourites Lindzi Germain (Reds and Blues) and Lenny Wood (Little Shop of Horrors).

The show runs at EchoTwo @ Echo Arena from Thursday 28 to Saturday 30 August. It travels to Belfast's Odyssey Arena from Thurs 18 to Sat 20 September. For Liverpool tickets visit www.echoarena.com or call 0844 8000 400. For Belfast it's www.ticketmaster.ie or 0844 277 4455.

CUTS FOR CUPS

The club has cut its domestic cup and Champions League match ticket prices in half for 17 to 21 year-olds next season.

Following the decision to hold season-ticket price increases in line with inflation for next season, the club is continuing to focus on youngsters with its cup pricing.

The junior matchday ticket, which was introduced last season, will remain at just £5 for selected games, and disabled matchday ticket prices will be frozen for the second consecutive season. The club has also reduced its cheapest matchday ticket from £38 to £37.

Chief executive officer Ian Ayre says: "The club recognises the importance of ticket prices and each year gives careful consideration when making decisions on all pricing. We have listened to the feedback from



our Supporters' Committee, who gather the views and thoughts of our much-valued supporters.

"With this in mind, we have held season-ticket prices relatively flat for 2014/15 and with matchday tickets we have focused again on getting more and more children and young people inside Anfield to watch our fixtures."

CARRA IN INDIA

Liverpool legend Jamie Carragher has helped launch the club's international football academy in India. Located in Pune in the west of the country, it is India's first residential football academy in partnership with a top-flight club. It follows a three-month scouting programme run by LFC coaches Ray Curtis and Michael Rice, visiting six Indian cities and identifying 64 talented players to form the first intake of the Academy's U17s and U19s, servicing local club DSK Shivajians.

"I was at Liverpool's Academy for six years before playing in the first team for 17 years," said Carra. "I know how important it is to have the right development as a young player to fulfil your potential. The players will follow Liverpool's philosophies both on and off the pitch. The kids are from all over the country and some of them have been awarded scholarships so this will be a life-changing experience for them."

The Academy is a purpose-built residential complex with 840 air-conditioned and fully-furnished rooms. Facilities include two full-size pitches, one 4G synthetic turf and one natural grass, an outdoor swimming pool, lecture theatre, classrooms, changing rooms, gym, canteen and convenience store.



CONGRATULATIONS CATHY

A Liverpool FC employee has been recognised for 45 years of service to the club with an Unsung Hero accolade at TheStadiumBusiness Awards in London.

Now in its fifth year, the event recognises leadership, innovation and achievement in the operation and management of sports facilities globally. More than 300 industry executives were in attendance for the ceremony at the RAF Museum in the capital, where retail catering manager Cathy Cubbin collected the special honour.

The judging panel noted Cathy's 'extremely professional approach, pro-active attitude and strategic vision'. She saw off competition from nominees from the USA and Sweden plus four contenders from the UK.

Cathy said: "I was shocked at being nominated, never mind winning it. I could not have achieved this sort of success without the team I work with, so I'd like to thank Paul Cuttill for his leadership and encouragement and all my colleagues who have made it possible. We've achieved so much at the stadium this year and look forward to continued success behind the scenes at Anfield."



Have you visited #theKOP yet?

LFC's brand new official social media hub is now live.

#theKOP is your one-stop shop for all LFC-related social media needs and gives you the chance to share your thoughts on the official website.

So, whether it's Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram or Pinterest, you'll find all the latest talking points on #theKOP.






Let your voice be heard...



liverpoolfc.com/thekop

ONE OF THE FAMILY

If you thought the last few months have been exciting for Reds fans, imagine being closer still to the club with LFC Official Membership



The start of the new season may still be a few weeks away but supporters can already gear up for the new campaign with an LFC Official Membership. Packages for the 2014/15 season are available to purchase online now and once again provide a range of awesome and exclusive benefits.

Six options are available from Full Membership to Membership Light and International Membership, plus three junior offerings – Little Liver, Mighty Red and Teen Red. With prices starting from £17.99, each package has been specifically designed to bring fans closer to the club than ever before with discounts, deals and the chance to win incredible prizes.

Among the many advantages of becoming an LFC Official Member is priority ticket access for Barclays Premier League matches, access to an online Members Area for exclusive content, a free digital magazine and the chance to win money-can't-buy prizes.

Numerous discounts are available too, at club retail shops, the Official LFC Online Store, the on-demand video service LFCTV GO, Anfield stadium tours and the Boot Room Sports Cafe.

Visit **www.liverpoolfc.com/membership** for an extensive guide to the Membership packages available with details of the specific benefits to each option and pricing structure.

Amanda and Becky (back row far left and right) at Wade Deacon

HERE COME THE GIRLS

A quartet of Liverpool Ladies have paid visits to local schools in recent weeks. Kate Longhurst and Libby Stout called into St Margaret's school in south Liverpool to show their support at Liverpool FC Foundation's Respect 4 All Disability Centre.

Striker Kate and goalkeeper Libby attended the event in Aigburth to assist with a coaching and Q&A session. The Women's Super League trophy was also in attendance. The Foundation has two Respect 4 All centres, in Aigburth and Wirral, which deliver free impairment-specific coaching to young people and adults with complex additional needs.

"It is an absolute privilege to come down and participate with both the children and the adults," said Kate. "To give something back to the community is extremely important and I hope to be involved in many more events." Libby added: "Footballers are often seen as role models but those participating in this coaching session



Kate and Libby (here and above) at the Respect 4 All Disability Centre



Working with children and adults to help inspire positive change through sport – follow us on Twitter @LFCFoundation to keep up to date with the community team's projects and activities

Becky and Amanda chat to Wade Deacon schoolchildren

> **"The children were really knowledgeable about Liverpool Ladies FC"**

are the real inspirational people. It's an honour to be involved."

Meanwhile midfielder Amanda Da Costa and defender Becky Easton visited two schools in Widnes: Holy Family School and Wade Deacon High School, both situated close to the Select Security Stadium.

"We really enjoy interacting with the local schoolchildren," said Amanda. "They were really knowledgeable about the Liverpool Ladies and asked some interesting questions – their enthusiasm was infectious." Becky added: "Both schools were very welcoming and it's brilliant to see so many young girls interested in playing football."

Wade Deacon PE teacher Lisa Hughes said: "Amanda and Becky gave some great footballing advice. Hopefully some of the girls can follow their lead and one day become professional footballers representing Liverpool Ladies."

Amanda coaching



Becky & Amanda Q&A

Libby Stout coaching at St Margaret's

RED AL

ORDER BACK ISSUES AND SUBSCRIBE TO THE



The first issue of the **Liverpool FC monthly magazine** coincided with the beginning of the Brendan Rodgers era at Anfield – and since then it's become a must-read for Reds at home and abroad. You can take out a money-saving subscription, or order individual back issues to complete your set, at the website below – just as you can for **This Is Anfield**, the essential matchday programme!

Visit www.programmemaster.com or

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WISH LIST

Summer is finally here and there's no excuse for not displaying your Liverpool FC allegiance in the sunshine. Here are just a few fab tee shirts and shorts – the full range is available to view and purchase at **www.liverpoolfc.com/store** and any official club store now

1



2



3



4











1 LFC Men's Crest Printed Tee (£15.00) A2944 2 LFC Men's Born And Bred Printed Tee (£15.00) A2940 3 LFC Board Short (£30.00) A3022
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All featured products are available to purchase now and available in all LFC official stores

Steven Gerrard on Instagram



19 June
Good day's training all ready now for the Uruguay match.



17 June
Johno and myself with Smally after he was dipped into the ice bath, he took it well though!



17 June
Leaving for Sao Paulo tomorrow. All ready for the tough match against Uruguay #allin or nothing



16 June
Happy anniversary to my gorgeous wife 7 years today! ❤



15 June
I am blessed to be the Father of these 3 Angels. Unconditional love I have for them, they are my world! ❤



13 June
Team on the bus. We're ready for tomorrow!



13 June
A view of the stadium through the jungle. The wait is almost over



12 June
Ice bath after training yesterday, two Scousers leading the way



5 June
Just loosening up before training with England's No1 therapist Paul Small aka Smally!



4 June
Congratulations to Flanno and his family on his England debut tonight, I know how much it means to them



4 June
Last night's view from my hotel room #Miami



3 June
Hello from Miami with fellow Reds @dstudge and Rickie Lambert. Also happy 122nd birthday to LFC!

David PRICE

It's exciting to think those European nights are coming back to Anfield...

At the end of next month Liverpool fans can look forward to their team being involved in the Champions League draw for the first time in five years. I'm sure that, like me, all Reds will be excited at that, as the Champions League is where this club belongs.

At the turn of the year we'd have snatched anyone's hands off if they'd offered us fourth spot as the aim at the start of last season was always to get back into that tournament.

As we all know, a fantastic second half of the season took us close to the title and enabled us to go straight into the group stages. We can now look forward to some more of those great European nights that have become part of the club's modern history. Although it's going to make next season busier in terms of the number of games, it's where we want to be.

Finishing second was a great achievement but we have missed those Champions League nights and it will be great to have them back.

It is important that Brendan Rodgers is now given the resources to strengthen the squad to compete on all fronts and I'm sure that will happen. The starting eleven is strong but there are always a couple of areas where you feel a squad could be strengthened. However, to come as close as we did last season suggests there's not much wrong.



The team for LFC's last Champions League appearance, in 2009

Having had time to reflect on last season, you begin to appreciate just what a rollercoaster everyone went through in that final month. I remember thinking to myself at one point that 14 wins on the trot would be a big ask and I always thought there would be twists and turns. But everyone will benefit for the experience.

We were probably all a little guilty of thinking we were going to win the league after that great result against Manchester City. I'm sure that was just down to the pure excitement of the thought of being champions again. You can't help the way you feel and it was really exciting.

"Europe will make next season busier – it's where we want to be"



It's still gut-wrenching when you think about what happened in those final three games but time is the best healer. I'm sure the players will come back for pre-season ready, like they say, to go again.

Last month I continued my comeback with a win over Yaroslav Zavorotnyi in Germany. Now I can look forward to getting back to fighting in Liverpool again. I've enjoyed fighting abroad as part of the rebuilding process, but I am in this sport to be part of big-time boxing. Taking that little step back to rebuild was the right thing to do, but now I'm ready to get back into those big fights, hopefully from the autumn time onwards.

Follow David on Twitter @DavidPrice_1























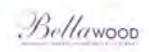




















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